





# A RECORD OF A MORTAL'S JOURNEY TO IMMORTALITY

BOOK 08

*Wang Yu*

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# A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality

(凡人修仙传)

by

Wang Yu  
(忘语)

# **Synopsis**

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A poor and ordinary boy from a village joins a minor sect in Jiang Hu and becomes an Unofficial Disciple by chance.

How will Han Li, a commoner by birth, establish a foothold for himself in his sect?

With his mediocre aptitude, how will he successfully traverse the path of cultivation and become an immortal?

This is a story of an ordinary mortal who, against all odds, clashes with devilish demons and the ancient celestials in order to find his own path to immortality.

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# Chapter 701: Scheme

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The attacker with the fluttering robes was Wang Tiangu.

Wang Tiangu calmly said, “Brother Yun, please don’t be so hasty! I merely wished to confirm whether or not Fellow Daoist Yun wished to use his priority selection on this jade box and renounce the privilege on any other items.”

The white-clothed old man regained his calm, but he glared at Wang Tiangu nonetheless, “Naturally, I want to take a look inside first. Why would I choose it if it were useless?”

Wang Tiangu wore a fearless expression and instead glanced at the three jade boxes on the jade bed. He calmly said, “If I remember correctly, we agreed that you two would have first pick and we would evenly divide what was leftover, but doesn’t Fellow Daoist believe that there will be enough to divide once the jade boxes are taken?”

“What is Fellow Daoist planning? Go ahead and say it. Do you plan on renegeing on our agreement?” Marquis Nanlong took several steps forward and stood alongside the old man. With a malicious expression, he swept his gaze past the three Ghost Spirit Sect cultivators.

Wang Tiangu smiled and calmly said, “I have no intention of breaking my promise. However, there are far too few treasures on the second floor to be decided. Since the jade boxes cannot be seen through with spiritual sense, they are probably the most precious items in the building. Perhaps Master Cang Kun’s profound cultivation arts or even the secret of Devilfall Valley lay within.”

Even under these circumstances, you two Fellow Daoists wish to perceive their value before choosing the item. Isn’t this excessive?”

The white-clothed old man “Excessive? I only recall that you Fellow Daoists personally agreed to our conditions of priority

selection. What does it have to do with us if there aren't enough items here!"

The old woman surprisingly backed Wang Tiangu, "Those words can't be said. Fellow Daoists are allowed to have first pick with the items, but they can't examine what are within the boxes. If Fellow Daoists are unsure, they may pick another item. For example, this glacial jade bed is a rather rare treasure. To cultivators with Yin Ice cultivation arts, it is a vastly precious treasure."

Once that was said, Marquis Nanlong's expression became gloomy. He suddenly emitted an immense pressure that forced Wang Tiangu and the old woman to take a step back.

At Nascent Soul stage, the difference in power between early and mid stage wasn't something to underestimate.

Marquis Nanlong narrowed his eyes and swept his gaze past the rest of the party with eyes as cold as a sword's edge, "If there is anyone who believes Fellow Daoist Wang's words to be reasonable, step forward. For Brother Wang to act so boldly, he should more than just Madam Tai supporting him!"

After a moment of silence, the tan cultivator calmly said, "Marquis Nanlong, there is no need to be angry! Brother Wang's words aren't without reason. Fellow Daoist can't just leave us with scraps."

As for the stern-faced cultivator, he unconsciously frowned and hesitantly stood behind Wang Tiangu as if forgetting of their unfriendly relationship. Suddenly, apart from Han Li, the two parties stood in confrontation.

Marquis Nanlong and the white-clothed old man's expressions vastly changed.

Marquis Nanlong instantly regained his calm and asked, "It seems you've formed a group beforehand. Just when have you decided this? You shouldn't have had the opportunity on the way

here.”

Wang Tiangu nonchalantly said, “It is impossible to have formed a group all at once. These Fellow Daoist and I had a small meeting before we left. We talked about a few plans of self preservations as well as any unexpected circumstances. This was one of the situations that we had anticipated. We now have no option but to right against Fellow Daoists Nanlong and Yun.”

Marquis Nanlong’s expression grew icy. His gaze soon landed on Han Li and he gravely asked, “Fellow Daoist Han, what will you do?”

As of current, the two mid Nascent Soul cultivators were standing in confrontation against four early Nascent Soul cultivators and two late Core Formation cultivators. From the balance of power, Han Li who had yet to pick a side had become a crucial point to the conflict.

Han Li didn’t immediately choose. He merely turned his head and calmly looked at Wang Tiangu’s party, attempting to read their expressions the best he could.

Not only did Wang Tiangu look at Han Li with a calm expression, but he also calmly smiled, revealing not a trace of worry. At his side, Wang Chan appeared excited and Yan Ruyan appeared to be at a loss. They didn’t seem to know that Wang Tiangu and the others had formed an alliance beforehand.

Lady Tai and the stern-faced cultivator didn’t reveal the slightest alarm. They merely glanced at Han Li with an emotionless gaze.

Han Li’s heart thumped. He felt that something was amiss and he grew greatly vigilant. He casually took several steps away from either party and smiled, “I don’t have an opinion. Regardless of whatever the outcome Fellow Daoist Wang or Brother Nanlong decides, I will not oppose it.

Marquis Nanlong wasn’t surprised by Han Li’s words. Han Li had

always displayed a neutral attitude. The question was merely verifying what the Marquis already suspected.

Marquis Nanlong's expression relaxed and he nodded to Han Li. His gaze then turned towards Wang Tiangu and he coldly smiled as if about to speak.

But at that moment, the white-clothed old man suddenly took a step forward and icily said, "Brother Nanlong, for what reason are you talking to them? Do these people truly believe that they will be able to cause us to succeed by joining hands. Delusional!" Once this was said, he opened his mouth and spat out a shining white magic treasure.

"Fellow Daoist Yun, wait. I am... You!" Marquis Nanlong frowned and thought to stop the old man's rash actions as their changes of victory weren't entirely certain. They didn't expect that the old man would suddenly command the silver wheel to fly in his direction.

A muffled peng sounded out.

Under Marquis Nanlong's incredulous gaze, the silver wheel tore through the golden light protecting his body and directly struck his chest. Not only was he forced to take several steps back, but there was also a depression left in his chest.

Marquis Nanlong responded with furious alarm. He flung his sleeve and shot a small golden blade from his palm towards the old man.

But at that moment, the old man blurred and appeared at Wang Tiangu's side. He had raised his hand and commanded the silver wheel to block the golden sword. He then coldly glanced at Marquis Nanlong's chest. Beneath his torn robes, there was a layer of shining azure cloth armor. Although it had a deep depression, it was still in one piece.

The old man's expression flickered and he expressionlessly

muttered, “Azure Rhino Armor! As expected, you wore it on hand.”

Marquis Nanlong’s cheek began to appear dark red and he stroked his chest, staring at the old man as he furiously spoke, “Good, very good! I didn’t expect you to have been bought by them.” Although their view was obstructed by blinding light, all could see that he was seriously injured.

The old man ignored Marquis Nanlong as if he were a stranger and said, “Fellow Daoists, be careful. Do not let him leave this place alive. With his cultivation, we will attract no small amount of trouble.”

The stern-faced cultivator sinisterly smiled, “Relax. We have so many people on our side, and he is seriously injured. It will be impossible for him to escape.” He then spat out a misty white flying saber from his mouth.

At that moment, Wang Tiangu turned his head to Han Li and amiably said, “Fellow Daoist Han, if you help us deal with him, you’ll receive a portion of his treasure. How about it?” He spoke sincerely as if ignoring the past hostilities that Han Li and Wang Chan shared.

“Help you?” The previous scene came as a great shock to Han Li and his expression vastly changed. His eyes then turned towards the stairs.

In the instant the old man attacked Marquis Nanlong, the old woman has silently guarded the staircase. Otherwise, Han Li would’ve already made his escape. Since the walls of the pavilion were flickering with white light, it was clear that it was under the effects of some formidable restriction and would be incapable of being broken through.

Han Li didn’t trust Wang Tiangu’s proposal to group together. Surely Han Li would be next after Marquis Nanlong was eliminated. They would’ve extended the offer to Han Li to join

hands beforehand were this not the case. He reckoned that from the very start, it had been decided for Han Li to die alongside Marquis Nanlong.

With that thought, Han Li's expression remained calm as he attempted to agree with them for the time being. However, Marquis Nanlong scoffed and said, "Fellow Daoist Han, you can't honestly believe such a shallow trick. Although I don't know what methods Fellow Daoist Wang used to entice the lot of them, my good friend of a hundred years included, there is hope for survival if we join hands. But if we allow them to deal with us separately, we will certainly meet our doom!"

# Chapter 702: Spreading Misfortune

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As Marquis Nanlong spoke, he brushed his hand past his chest. In a pulse of soft white light, the depression in the armor was restored back to normal.

Wang Tiangu and the others were surprised, but the white-clothed old man calmly explained, “There is no need to be worried. He is merely using a secret technique to temporarily suppress his injuries. There is still lasting damage! But he will be troublesome together with that Youngster Han. Have someone tangle him down for the time being. Kill Marquis Nanlong first.”

Once the old man finished, he unhurriedly pointed the silver wheel in front of him. The magic treasure immediately turned into a silver streak above his head. A mist of white light spread around his body, causing him to appear indistinct. Knowing that Marquis Nanlong held a bone-deep grudge against him, he wasn’t about to hold back in the slightest.

Wang Tiangu frowned and felt that this was reasonable. He turned his head to the stern-faced cultivator and said, “Brother Long, deal with that youngster for a moment. You don’t need to try your hardest to kill him. Just keep him occupied. After we deal with Marquis Nanlong, we’ll kill him together.”

Wang Tiangu icily glared at Han Li and no longer contained his killing intent. His body suddenly emitted a meter-tall black radiance, completely enveloping him in darkness.

When the old woman and the tan cultivator saw this, they each spat our their magic tools in preparation.

The stern-faced cultivator chuckled and silently slip out a milky-white jade scepter from his sleeve. He then took several steps forward and mysteriously smiled at Han Li, “Not a problem. I’ll deal with Fellow Daoist Han!”

From his point of view, holding down a cultivator that had just entered Nascent Soul stage was a trivial affair. It was far safer than attempting to confront a mid Nascent Soul cultivator.

Han Li stared at the stern-faced cultivator and remained entirely still, but when he saw that the old woman had left the stairwell, his heart began to heavily thump. He tightly grabbed onto the ancient treasure that was hidden in his sleeve.

At that moment, Marquis Nanlong swept his sleeve and sent out a mist of gold, sweeping the three jade boxes on the bed into his grasp.

“Take it!” Marquis Nanlong tossed one of the jade boxes to Han Li without any hesitation.

This action was greatly unexpected and none attempted to block it. Han Li easily caught the jade box with slight confusion on his face.

With his arms behind his back, Marquis Nanlong explained, “Since Fellow Daoist isn’t following their wretched actions, I will give this jade box to you. If the box truly contains the secrets of Devilfall Valley and Fellow Daoist is able to make it out alive, it can be considered a fated chance.”

When the others heard this, their expressions vastly changed.

Han Li glanced down at the jade box in his hand and licked his lips. He inwardly felt a desire to howl with laughter, but he managed to retain his calm with his exceeding force of will. The item that all the cultivators presently wished to acquire had fallen right into his hands. He found it hilarious.

Of course, Marquis Nanlong hadn’t done this out of kindness. Since the other side were determined to acquire the jade boxes, he gave a jade box to Han Li in order to divert their attention and create an opportunity for himself to escape.

Marquis Nanlong was quite a decisive and formidable character

to abandon a treasure that was already in his possess. But once Han Li realized that very treasure was in his hands, he couldn't help but inwardly laugh.

Han Li flipped his hand without a thought and placed it away in a storage pouch.

Wang Tiangu's expression grew sullen and he decisively ordered, "Chan'er, assist Fellow Daoist Long with Ruyan. Do not allow that Youngster Han the opportunity to escape. The others and I will be enough for the Marquis."

He appeared calm and his reason wasn't overturned by his desire for the jade box. He merely sent the weakest among them to look after Han Li and paid him no more heed.

When the others saw this, they grew tempted, but they all knew that so long as they could kill Marquis Nanlong first, Han Li was as good as theirs.

"Yes, Second Uncle! I was already thinking of it!" Wang Chan's eyes revealed a malicious expression and he sinisterly smiled. He then beckoned to Yan Ruyan and walked towards Han Li.

A complicated expression flickered on Yan Ruyan's face for a moment, and she silently followed after him.

Han Li calmly glanced at the two without the slightest change in emotion.

Han Li found it rather laughable. Although weapons were at the ready, the battle had yet to start on the other side. It wasn't due to any lingering sentiments, but due to caution. With Marquis Nanlong now a cornered beast, there was a chance he might steel his resolve and decide to take one or two with them in mutual destruction.

With the fear of a counterattack from a mid Nascent Soul on death's door, they were each unwilling to be the first to strike in fear of receiving a fatal counterattack.

Moreover, they weren't in the slightest rush. With Marquis Nanlong's wounds only worsening with time, the advantage laid with them.

But bafflingly, Marquis Nanlong stood motionlessly in place as if he were unconcerned with his injuries. However, his red complexion was only growing brighter, nearly becoming the same shade as blood itself.

This only caused Wang Tiangu and the others to appear more hesitant. In fear that the Marquis would employ a secret technique to muster the entirety of his strength, they each gazed at him from a distance with icy gazes.

As for the stern-faced cultivator, he didn't take the initiative to attack Han Li. His only goal was to tie him down. While Wang Chan held only the desire to kill Han Li as soon as possible, he lacked the cultivation to act.

As such, the entire building was entirely peaceful despite the profuse killing intent that was present.

A short moment later, Han Li wore a pensive expression and sighed. Although he wasn't loud, it was noticed by everyone present.

As each of the Nascent Soul eccentrics in the building were shrewd and cunning, none of them turned their attention to Han Li apart from the stern-faced faced cultivator. As for Wang Chan, he curled his lips and sneered.

From their point of view, Han Li could only take action after Marquis Nanlong. It was only in that case he could take advantage of the chaos to escape. Nobody believed that Han Li would take action after he sighed.

Han Li calmly raised his hand and revealed a pitch-black item in his hand.

Marquis Nanlong narrowed his eyes. Before he could even see

what it was, he flung it into the air without any reservation. It spun in a circle before instantaneously expanding to the size of twenty-five meters, forming what seemed to be a wall between both sides of the conflict..

When the stern-faced cultivator clearly saw the pitch-black mountain, he didn't know what treasure it was. While he was surprised, he managed to react and pointed to the jade scepter in front of him. In an instant, the jade scepter loudly hummed and brightly shined with white light. A huge white tiger then materialized from the radiance.

Although the tiger appeared indistinct, it bared its ferocious fangs as soon as it appeared and instantly shot a beam of lazing white light towards the black mountain.

With a loud rumble, the white light instantly engulfed a majority of the mountain.

Wang Chan also reacted. He formed an incantation gesture with his hands, engulfing his body in a crimson mist. In that same moment, the stench of blood filled the air.

As for Yan Ruyan, she also formed an incantation gesture and enveloped herself in crimson mist. However, she emitted an odd fragrance rather than the scent of blood. A whiff of it would cause one's mind to become dizzy and muddled.

The stern-faced cultivator felt some relief at this. As he willed the white tiger to spit out another beam of light with his jade scepter, he slapped his storage pouch with his other hand, summoning an inch-large, faint-blue gourd into his hand.

Just as he was about to deploy the gourd, he suddenly heard a faint roll of thunder. In his alarm, he formed a hand incantation without any hesitation and formed a dense light barrier around him.

At nearly that same time, a flash of silver lightning appeared at

his side, revealing Han Li with silver wings emerging from his back.

“Ah, you...” The stern-faced cultivator was greatly shocked, but as a result of his rich combat experience, he hastily raised the gourd in his hand and shot out a dazzling bolt of blue lightning.

In the instant the blue lightning shot out, Han Li didn’t dodge. Rather, he blankly opened his mouth, spitting out a thread of blue flame. The blue flames pierced through the white light barrier without the slightest resistance and shot towards the stern-faced cultivator.

# Chapter 703: The First to Act

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The meager wisp of blue flame was able to pass through the light barrier unobstructed, much to the surprise of the stern-faced cultivator. Lacking any time to dodge, the wisp of flame struck his neck. With a crackle, the stern-faced cultivator was entirely consumed by blue ice, forming a glistening ice sculpture.

Much to the stern-faced cultivator's misfortune, Han Li had particularly directed the Celestial Ice Flames to strike at his neck as a result of his experience from fighting the spell warrior. With his head frozen over, he had no opportunity to cast any techniques and change the outcome.

In the same moment Han Li turned the stern-faced man into an ice sculpture, the blue lightning from the gourd struck Han Li before its thunder could sound out. But before it could strike Han Li's body, a net of faint gold lightning suddenly appeared on Han Li's body. In a flicker of golden light, the blue lightning was absorbed and disappeared from sight.

Han Li then hesitantly reached forward and quickly snatched away the blue gourd.

Han Li's use of the thunderstorm wings, the icing of the stern-faced cultivator surnamed Long, and the acquisition of the treasure took place in a mere instant. Just as Wang Chan had thought to step forward and assist the stern-faced cultivator, he witnessed his instantaneous defeat. Wang Chan could hardly believe what he just saw.

When Han Li coldly glanced in his direction, Wang Chan responded without a thought. With fear in his voice, he yelled, "Cast together! Use the Blood Spirit Arts to restrain him!" Once that was said, he grabbed onto Yan Ruyan's hand and hurriedly uttered an incantation. Crimson mist suddenly spread through the air.

Yan Ruyan didn't resist, merely displaying a trace of disgust deep within her eyes. After a moment of hesitation, she followed suit and uttered an incantation. The blood mist from both of their bodies combined as one and condensed into a mist of violet blood light.

After Wang Chan and Yan Ruyan disappeared into the violet mist, it began to release ghostly howls as if monsters truly laid within.

When Han Li saw this, he faintly smirked.

Marquis Nanlong suddenly sent Han Li a voice transmission, "Good! I didn't expect for Fellow Daoist Han to possess such heaven-defying abilities. If we join hands, we may be able to match them."

When Han Li heard this, he swept his gaze to the other side.

Marquis Nanlong and the others had yet to fight, but the others were staring at him with absolute shock. Marquis Nanlong appeared delighted by Han Li's recent display and his hopes of escaping grew stronger.

Marquis Nanlong immediately said, "So long as you join hands with me, I am willing to give you another jade box!"

'Join hands? Haha...' Han Li coldly laughed and said nothing. He carried no such desire.

He clearly understood that he was able to easily dispatch of the stern-faced cultivator because he was unaware of the deadly Celestial Ice Flames. Else, the battle would've taken far longer, even if he ended up victorious.

There were still three early and one mid Nascent Soul cultivators on the opposing side. If Marquis Nanlong was uninjured, they might've stood a chance, but as gravely wounded as he was now, Han Li would only be dragged down alongside him. Regardless of whatever it may contain, the jade box's contents wasn't worth his

life.

Before he fled, he needed to have them start fighting and have their focus be on the Marquis. Otherwise, their attentions would be focused on him, and it would be difficult for him to escape. With that thought, Han Li paid them no further heed and flapped his wings, leaving only thunder behind.

When the white-clothed old man saw this, he immediately shouted, “Not good! He’s about to run! Block him! Don’t let him escape with the jade box!”

With the scene of Han Li instantly killing a similar grade cultivator still fresh in their minds, the old woman and the tan man ignored his words entirely. Even Wang Tiangu appeared hesitant. He couldn’t decide whether to take action.

After all, if Han Li truly left, they would be able to deal with the Marquis with complete certainty. The two jade boxes may as well be theirs. But if they were to forcefully detain Han Li, with his strange abilities, even the mid Nascent Soul old man might not be able to prevail over him. It was far too risky.

However, the jade box in Han Li’s grasp might contain the secrets of Devilfall Valley that they all so deeply desired. As shrewd and cunning as Wang Tiangu was, he found himself wavering between two extremely difficult choices.

When the white-clothed old man saw their hesitation, he understood them perfectly. He also felt some fear towards Han Li’s Celestial Ice Flames. Moreover, if he were to leave this place to deal with Han Li, the Marquis may escape. Although Marquis Nanlong’s injuries were severe, three early Nascent Soul cultivators didn’t have much hope of remaining steadfast against his formidable secret techniques.

He also found himself hesitant as to what to do.

In a flash of lightning, Han Li appeared at the top of the stairs. He

strangely smiled at Wang Tiangu and company before pointing to the black mountain. The black mountain trembled and disappeared in an instant, only to appear above them and dropping down with all its might.

None had expected that Han Li would launch such a sudden attack, to their fury.

However, even the white-clothed old man didn't dare to take on the mountain's might alone. They could only helplessly dodge out of the way as the mountain fell down.

This was finally the moment Marquis Nanlong chose to strike. His eyes brightened and he transformed into a blinding streak of golden light, charging directly towards the old woman. In her fright, the old woman's body flashed with yellow light, summoning a small yellow shield to block the Marquis' approach. In an instant, gold and yellow light intertwined, but eventually the golden light engulfed the old woman.

When the others saw this, they instantly struck without any further thought and attempted to restrain the Marquis.

But through some unknown secret technique, the golden light on his body became increasingly dense. At that same moment, he released several powerful ancient treasures to enter the fray. He didn't appear to be at the slightest disadvantage in this chaotic battle.

The others were completely occupied in their alarm and couldn't pay any attention to Han Li's actions.

When Han Li saw this, he was satisfied and pointed once more to the black mountain. It shrunk to several inches in a gust of wind and shot back into his hand. He then turned his gaze towards the violet blood mist with a stern expression on his face.

With pupils glowing with blue light, Han Li gazed at a certain portion of the mist. He raised his hand without any hesitation and

black light began to surge through it. A dense mass of black-red light shot out from his palm towards the mist, discharging the Yin Devil Execution.

A wretched scream came from the blood mist, but Han Li had already disappeared with a flash of lightning.

Even if Wang Chan somehow managed to survive the strike, his injuries would be grave. While he did wish to take advantage of this opportunity to ensure Wang Chan's death, he was certain that Wang Tiangu would come to Wang Chan's aid. When that moment came, he would be tied down in a battle against Wang Tiangu, attracting much danger onto himself.

In any case, Han Li would always have the ability to kill a trifling late Core Formation cultivator like Wang Chang, so he had no need to risk his safety now. As such, he immediately fled after making his attack.

Han Li's figure appeared at the exit of the building in a blur, and he flew straight towards the hall's entrance. Along the way, a white streak of light flew into Han Li's sleeve from the corner of the hall. It appeared to be a small white fox.

"Master, I—" Silvermoon spoke with an excited tone.

Han Li flew straight out the hall and gloomily interrupted, "Now is not the time to talk. Leave it for when we're out of danger."

When Han Li broke through the Wondrous Soul Restriction, he deliberately used a flash of dazzling light to hide a gap in the restriction that he created. In that instant, he had Silvermoon go through. Afterwards, he deliberately stalled for time as he dissolved the formation. It was for this reason that Han Li had taken such efforts to break through the Wondrous Soul restriction, not on the mere basis of priority selection.

From how excited Silvermoon appeared, it seemed she had reaped quite a bit of profit from the pavilion.

Having taken the initiative to seize the treasures, Han Li had refused Marquis Nanlong's proposal to fight together and simply chose to prioritize his own escape.

# Chapter 704: Mileshed Line

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In the instant Han Li shot through the entrance of the hall, he felt an earth-shaking rumble from behind him. Alarmed, Han Li hastily turned his gaze around.

He saw that the Jadepier Pavilion suddenly ruptured to reveal a blazing golden sun that was three meters wide. It flew out from rubble, carrying a faint silhouette. It appeared Marquis Nanlong had executed some sort of secret technique.

Han Li was shaken by the sight. The Jadepier Pavilion wasn't an ordinary building. Han Li doubted his own ability to break through its walls, but Marquis Nanlong was able to turn it into rubble in a single blow. It seemed the full might of a Nascent Soul cultivator wasn't a simple matter in the least.

With his attention back to the matter at hand, Han Li flew into the center of the hall and glanced at the restored walls around him. He raised his hand without any further thought and flickered his finger. A meter long streak of sword light flew out from his hand and struck the opposing wall.

A rough hole was cut in the wall. Then in a flash of white light, the hole disappeared without a trace.

Han Li frowned. Just as he thought of another method to break it, his expression suddenly changed and he turned around in an instantaneous blur.

Marquis Nanlong was standing there about ten meters behind him. His body was glaring with dazzling golden light but his complexion was deathly pale.

Han Li's eyes gazed past him towards the pavilion. He simply saw that a huge dome of golden light was covering the pavilion. Occasional flashes of black and white light could be seen within along with the faint sounds of explosions.

A trace of shock appeared on Han Li's face.

Through the use of some sort of heaven-defying technique, he managed to trap the others inside for the time being, giving him the time to escape.

"The outer restrictions need to be opened with the formation flag. Fellow Daoist Han, since I only have a single formation flag, it will take some more time. I will have to trouble you to delay them. Although the might of my ancient treasure may be great, I don't know how much longer they will be trapped. They could break out at any moment."

Marquis Nanlong forced a smile and flipped his hand. He held a small fluttering yellow flag in his hand and began to mutter incantations without delay. It appeared he didn't have the slightest fear of Han Li attacking him.

Han Li's gaze flickered and he quickly slapped his storage pouch. An emerald-green formation plate appeared in his hand, the magic tool that he had used to break through the Wondrous Soul Restriction.

He quickly drew several azure talisman characters into the air and blew them onto the formation plate, causing it to brightly shine with azure light.

Han Li formed an incantation gesture with his hands and softly shouted, "Rise!" Apart from the side that Marquis Nanlong was facing, the walls turned back to blue crystal, sealing off the hall once more.

Marquis Nanlong ceased his incantation at the sight and joyfully said, "You are able to control the Wondrous Soul Formation?"

Revealing not a trace of pride, Han Li sullenly said, "I'm not even capable of mustering even a tenth of its original power. It won't be able to hold them for long either. Brother Nanlong had best open the way before they break through."

When Marquis Nanlong heard this, he discovered that the crystal walls were far darker than they were originally, and his expression of joy suddenly vanished. He then tossed the small flag, having it disappear into the wall in a trace of light before continuing with his incantation.

At that same moment, he heard deafening rumbles from behind him and saw that the crystal walls had begun to sparkle. The thunderous explosions were clear to hear. It seems they've managed to break through the Marquis' ancient treasure and have begun their attack on the crystal walls.

Han Li glanced at the stone wall and saw it was faintly glowing with white light before turning his gaze back to the blue crystal walls. After some slight hesitation, he tossed a spirit beast pouch into the air, summoning a swarm of black-tainted Gold Devouring Beetles. With the formation of an incantation gesture, the beetles swarm frantically surrounded Han Li and transformed into tri-colored armor.

An odd expression momentarily appeared on the Marquis' face when he saw Han Li executing the Insect Armor Technique. But since their need for escape was urgent, he left the matter alone.

A short moment later, the crystal walls violently trembled as if on the verge of collapse. Likewise, the stone wall also began to shake and part amongst the white light, revealing the stairway ahead of them.

As soon as Marquis Nanlong saw this, his body pulsed in golden light and he shot out. Behind him, Han Li's Thunderstorm Wings flapped with golden lightning and suddenly disappeared from sight.

A moment later, Han Li appeared in front of Marquis Nanlong and appeared in midair. But soon, he saw a clear explosion from down below.

With an expression of alarm, Han Li flapped his Thunderstorm

Wings once more and he instantly arrived at the exit of the stairs. Afterwards, he employed his lightning movement to its fullest extent and began to flicker into the distance.

Just as Han Li flew a kilometer away, an ear-piercing cry came from the stairs, followed by a ball of blinding golden light streaking across the sky.

The Marquis flew once around and announced in an icy, resentful tone, “Take this to heart; you had best avoid falling into my hands or I will exterminate both your body and soul!”

Once this oath was finished, his golden light gleamed and began to appear indistinct. Just as a silver light shot out from the mountain entrance, the golden radiance suddenly turned exceptionally slim and flickered several times before tearing through the sky at an immense speed. In nearly a single breath, it had disappeared from sight.

At that moment, Han Li was already on the edge of the sky, appearing as an intermittently flickering dot.

Closely following the silver light, a streak of black light faded away to reveal a silhouette. Wang Tiangu solemnly asked, “What movement techniques are they using to travel so quickly?”

The silver light faded away to reveal the white-clothed old man. He gloomily said, “Marquis Nanlong is using a secret technique that was personally created by Master Cang Kun, Mileshed Line. By consuming vast amounts of vitality and blood essence, one is able to instantly travel into a distance in light as thin as a thread. It makes their aura entirely hidden so that they cannot be tracked. While he truly hasn’t traveled too far away, it will be impossible to detect him with spiritual sense. As for that Youngster Han, he seems to be controlling lightning through use of those strange wings. It should be the instant lightning movement of legend!”

At that moment, the old woman and the tan cultivator both shot out from the passage and heard of the old man’s words.

With a pale and uneasy expression, the old woman asked, “Given how fantastic their movement techniques are, they’ll be able to make a clean escape! What should we do?”

The tan cultivator now appeared in complete disarray, “That Youngster Han is of little consequence, but if Marquis Nanlong escapes, it will be great cause for trouble. Fellow Daoists Wang and Yun, we only agreed to collude against Marquis Nanlong because of you two!”

The old man coldly chuckled and sinisterly said, “Be at ease! From the beating he received, what do you think his true cultivation is now? From forcefully drawing magic power in his injured state to using the Mileshed Line, he will certainly be gravely injured without any further action.

Even if he spent the next hundred years restoring his vitality, he won’t be able to preserve his mid Nascent Soul stage cultivation. Moreover, when did I ever say I didn’t have a way of tracking him down.”

With roused spirits, the tan man suddenly asked, “Brother Yun means...”

The old man readily said, “Since I planned to kill him, it is only natural that I prepared for this ahead of time. So long as he isn’t able to move a hundred-fifty kilometers in a single stretch, I will be able to find him. But given the current state of his body, he won’t be able to sustain the Mileshed Line for long. When that time comes, we’ll track him down and dispose of him.”

The old woman’s expression relaxed and she sighed, “That’s good. This is greatly reassuring. Were it not for the black jade lotus that Fellow Daoist Wang gave to me and the promise of sharing the secrets of Devilfall Valley with us, I definitely wouldn’t have braved such dangers. Becoming enemies with a mid Nascent Soul cultivator isn’t a wise decision.”

The tan cultivator also appeared relieved and he said, “We’ve

spent quite a bit of effort for the secrets of Devilfall Valley! However we didn't expect that Fellow Daoist Yun was actually an elder for the Ghost Spirit Sect. How surprising! Could it be that the Six Devil Dao Sects have so many hidden elders?" Once he finished speaking, a complicated expression appeared on his face.

The white-clothed old man shook his head and insipidly said, "Although I came from the Ghost Spirit Sect in my youth, I wasn't very involved with sect affairs. Thus, only a few know of my true identity as a Ghost Spirit Sect elder. I didn't truly have the intention to deceive any others. To tell the truth, Marquis Nanlong was a descendant of Master Cang Kun and had been my friend for many years. I didn't wish to kill him. But it is a pity that I discovered he stealthily formed friendships with the elders of the Righteous Dao Heavenpeak Sect and grew interested in joining their sect. I urged him to change his mind, but his mind was unchanged. Furthermore, he planned to draw support of the Heavenpeak Sect to enter Devilfall Valley. As such, I couldn't just standby and allow the Righteous Dao to grow in power. I had no option but to deal with him."

# Chapter 705: Nascent Soul Combustion

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With a slight surprise, the old woman asked, “Marquis Nanlong has ties with the Heavenpeak Sect? Fellow Daoist Yun, you didn’t mentioned this matter before!” As for the tan cultivator, he appeared furious.

The white-clothed old man surnamed Yun smiled and calmly said, “I didn’t mention the matter? You just carelessly overlooked the matter. However, Marquis Nanlong truly hasn’t yet entered the Heavenpeak Sect. If you are feeling worried, you can join my sect and become elders. That way, the Heavenpeak Sect won’t be able to touch you!”

The old woman coldly snorted, “Given my age, I have no interest receiving further constraints.”

The tan cultivator frowned and indifferently said, “I am accustomed to being without responsibilities and also have no interest in joining your sect.

“That is truly a pity! If you were to join our Ghost Spirit Sect, our prestige would soar,” the old man didn’t mind their refusals and changed the topic, “I won’t insist on having you two join. So long as Marquis Nanlong is killed here, the Heavenpeak sect won’t take the initiative to make any trouble on behalf of a dead man. It is just unfortunate that despite being friends with him for a hundred years, he hadn’t told me his intentions with regards to Devilfall Valley. I only knew that there was a secret cave residence here and that there was a map of Devilfall Valley that was left behind by Master Cang Kun. As such, we won’t exterminate his Nascent Soul when we capture him. I will first use a soul scouring technique and see if he possesses any useful information.”

Wang Tiangu worriedly said, “If by chance the map was in the box that Youngster Han made off with, wouldn’t we be helpless?”

Old Man Yun slowly said, “That can be dealt with. If this comes

to happen, we'll leak this matter to all the sects in the Heavenly South. When that time comes, even the Heavenly Dao Alliance will wish to pursue this matter, let alone the Righteous and Devilish Dao, creating an opportunity for us to profit in the chaos. Let's see how a sect as trifling as the Drifting Cloud Sect deals with the greed of wishing to monopolize the gains from Devilfall Valley. In addition to the map, I am also interested in any information Marquis Nanlong may have on Devilfall Valley. With this information, we'll be a step ahead even if the method of entering Devilfall Valley became widespread."

After a moment of thought, Wang Tiangu proposed, "If it somehow turns out that way, that will be all we can do. But before that, he could try trading for the map. After all, even if he bears great resentment against us, there are few matters in this world that can't be traded for."

"Hehe! Junior Martial Brother Wang's proposal is preferable to my own," The old man then sighed and muttered, "Nevertheless, the youngster's abilities are truly bizarre. Is he truly around the same age as Junior Martial Nephew Wang? From that last battle, the cunning he displayed was greater than even ours, and he was even able to defeat Fellow Daoist Long. If I were to fight him alone, I too doubt my own ability to hold against him."

Wang Tiangu's eyes flickered and a trace of vexation appeared on his face, "I asked Wang Chan about him before. It seemed this person was an ordinary Yellow Maple Valley cultivator. At the time, he was truly but a Foundation Establishment cultivator. His vast accomplishments in cultivation and ability are something of a mystery. Were it not for his abilities being contrary to expectation and his meddling, we would've been able to easily dispose of Marquis Nanlong."

When the old woman and the others heard this, they could only wryly smile.

Wang Tiangu suggested, "With that being said, let's first head

back and free Fellow Daoist Long. With his cultivation, he should be able to survive being frozen. Also, I am concerned for my nephew. Before that Youngster Han departed, he released a blood-red light that appeared similar to the Devilblood Cleave that I personally cultivate. I don't know how well Chan'er was able to receive it."

The old man replied, "That's fine. Since we don't have any method of detecting him for the time being, let's go take a look at them. We'll carry out the pursuit once Marquis Nanlong's is no longer capable of carrying out the Mileshed Line."

In the next moment, the party flew back into the mountain.

The party arrived at the ruins of the Jadepier Pavilion once more to see a bewildered Yan Ruyan. She was crouching near Wang Chan who laid motionlessly on the floor.

When Wang Tiangu saw this, his asked with an icy tone, "What happened? Were any of Chan'er's vitals struck?" Even now, Wang Tiangu still displayed exceptional calmness.

Wearing a slightly anxious expression, Yan Ruyan hesitantly replied, "No, but his leg..."

Wang Tiangu took several steps forward and tensely frowned. He saw that both of Wang Chan's legs were missing from below their knees, but strangely enough, there wasn't a hint of blood.

Yan Ruyan helplessly said, "Lord Husband and I had joined hands to cast the Blood Spirit Art's blood mist, but we were instantly attacked by some sort of strange technique. The blood mist was incapable of blocking it and my Lord Husband had dodged too late. His legs were..."

Wang Tiangu gloomily asked, "Since this is the case, then why aren't you using any techniques to recover his legs? You should know such a technique."

With a tense brow, Yan Ruyan timidly said, "I've attempted to

restore his legs several times now, but the techniques aren't responding in the slightest. Although his wounds didn't shed any blood, a black Qi condensed around the wound and it can't be driven off! It could be the reason why the healing technique failed and why he is unconscious."

Wang Tiangu's expression relaxed and he began to concentrate his gaze on Wang Chan's wounds, "It can't have been a common attack that struck you. Let me take a look."

Wang Chan's wounds were covered in faint black Qi as expected. Wang Tiangu lifted his hands and his fingers flickered with black light as he grabbed the harmful Qi from one of the legs, gathering it into a pea-sized black ball on his finger.

He thought to dispose of the harmful Qi with true fire, but after some thought, he slapped his storage pouch and wrapped the ball of black Qi with spiritual power before placing it in a jade bottle. Once it was properly taken care of, he casually placed it away.

It seemed Wang Tiangu planned on examining this item for further understanding of Han Li's techniques. When Yan Ruyan saw that Wang Tiangu paid her no heed, a complicated expression momentarily appeared on her face before disappearing without a trace.

Once Wang Tiangu took care of the black Qi on the other leg, Yan Ruyan silently made another attempt to restore his limbs.

Wang Tiangu nodded his head with satisfaction and turned his attention to the other side.

The white-clothed old man and the others were at a loss as they stood around the iced clad body of the stern-faced cultivator.

Wang Tiangu walked towards them and bafflingly asked, "What? You Fellow Daoists aren't able to free him?"

A trace of fear appeared on the old woman's expression. She muttered, "Free him? How? This ice is far more insidious than we

could have imagined!"

The old man simply kept silent as he wore a gloomy expression on his face.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Wang Tiangu turned his gaze to the ice-clad body and began to ponder.

"Brother Wang, take a good look." The tan cultivator suddenly raised his hand and flung a fist-sized chunk of jade towards the ice-clad body.

Blue light flashed upon impact and the jade chunk was instantly covered in blue ice before dissolving into countless specks of fading glitter.

The tan man remained still as he stood three meters away and pointed at the ice-clad body. Scorching white true fire shot towards the ice from his finger, but in the moment the true fire touched the blue ice, it disappeared in a flash of light as if it were absorbed.

Wang Tiangu felt his breath turn cold!

The old man sighed and asked, "This blue ice is vicious. It seems that Fellow Daoist Long's body has long died. It seems we can only have his Nascent Soul manifest and find a suitable body to possess. Didn't Fellow Daoist Long already possess a body once before?"

The tan man appeared to be familiar with the stern-faced cultivator and sullenly said, "No, this was his original body."

The old man nodded his head and said, "That's good. Now we just need to have Fellow Daoist Long manifest his Nascent Soul."

As if having heard this, the stern-faced cultivator's body shined with white light. Then with a muffled bang, his entire body turned to ash and faded away. All that remained in the blue ice was an inch large Nascent Soul. It was clasping onto a thumb-sized jade ornament in his hand and its face was filled with resentment.

It opened its small mouth and spouted out fire-red vital Nascent flames onto the jade ornament in its hands. It then raised it above its head and suddenly surrounded its body in red-white flame. Without any further delay, he attempted to charge straight out.

“Wait...” The old man seemed to think of something and hastily attempted to stop this, but he spoke too late. The Nascent Soul passed through the ice.

What resulted afterwards sent chills down their spine. The formidable white-red flames had seemed to have been set alight by the ice, engulfing both the white-red flames and the Nascent Soul in blue fire.

The white-red flames were instantly consumed by the blue fire, resulting in the deathly wail of the Nascent Soul. It turned frantic as it charged through the air. After flying about fifty meters away, it attempted to roll and exterminate the flames as it wildly howled in pain.

A short moment later, the screams came to an abrupt stop and the Nascent Soul was refined in a ball of light that faded away. The cultivator surnamed Long was now dead in both soul and body.

# Chapter 706: The Jade Box's Treasure

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Through use of lightning movement, Han Li was able to travel fifty kilometers in a single stretch. He then paused for a moment before gaining his bearings and swapped to using the blood-red cloak before continuing on his flight as a streak of crimson light.

After flying five hundred kilometers out, he spotted a Moulan Tribe that consisted of tens of thousands of mortals. He stopped with faint excitement brimming in his heart.

While he was at the Drifting Cloud Sect, the topic of the war with the Moulan spell warriors and Heavenly South cultivators had come up during a conversation with his fellow sect elders. Although the ordinary mortals from the Moulan tribes couldn't cultivate spirit techniques, during times of war the Moulan spell warriors would organize many temporary parties of mortals to seize the spirit stone mines and material sources that the Heavenly South cultivators were too occupied to attend to.

As such, the Moulan spell warriors wouldn't return empty handed once they eventually retreated.

Of course, the Nine Nations Union were well aware of the looting, but they couldn't afford to look after these resources as war was waged. If they had too few cultivators to guard these areas, it was possible that they would be wiped out by any high grade cultivators that the Moulan would send.

If there were too many cultivators, it would be to the detriment of the main battlefield. The only feasible option was to wait until after these areas were seized and recapture them afterwards. The Moulan mortals would be defenselessly slaughtered.

It was unfortunate that the Moulan didn't mind the deaths of mortals. Once a group was exterminated, they would immediately send another, exchanging mortal lives for these precious resources. Additionally, they would occasionally set up traps and

inflict heavy losses on cultivators attempting to reclaim these resource areas.

With the loss of these many cultivators, the Nine Nations Union had turned a blind eye to these locations. Regardless, the Moulan mortals wouldn't be able to harvest many materials or mine much spirit stones. So long as they repelled the spell warriors as quickly as they could, the Moulan mortals would obediently follow them back.

Han Li now saw large ranks of oxen carts making their way to the Heavenly South with many young men and women accompanying them. They should be the mortal division that was sent to gather materials in the Heaven South for the time being.

Han Li remained in the air above them and swept his immense spiritual sense past them, spotting one Foundation Establishment stage and three Qi Condensation stage spell warriors.

Han Li lowered his head in thought for a moment before suddenly forming an incantation gesture with his hands. His figure then blurred and reappeared in front of a dilapidated Moulan cart. It was filled with tattered oxen skins along with a few hoes and other tools.

With a wave of his arm, Han Li turned the cart's interiors into a pile of ash and then sat down inside it without any qualms.

From his musings, he concluded that boldly returning to the Heavenly South while the Moulan spell warriors were attacking in full force would be rife with trouble. Although he wouldn't be in danger unless he encountered several top ranked spell warriors, the possibility was still there. This time, he wouldn't be accompanied by a party of eight Nascent Soul cultivators.

Not only did he need to be wary of spell warriors, but he also had to avoid Wang Taingu and the others to avoid any deadly confrontations. Now that he was hidden amongst a party of mortals, he should be able to make it out safely of the Moulan

Plains in a few days.

Few would pay any notice to a group of mortals. And given his current cultivation, so long as a late Nascent Soul stage spell warrior didn't inspect the army, his existence was safely hidden. Once he entered the deserts beyond the plains, he would be outside the influence of the Moulan tribes and he would be able to return to the Heavenly South.

As Han Li meditated inside the carriage, the conversations of the Moulan mortals outside could be clearly heard.

The dialect of the Moulan differed from that used by the people of the Heavenly South, but Han Li had already learned their language from a few related jade slips. With his immense spiritual sense, he had managed to comprehend most of this knowledge in only a couple of days, and was able to clearly listen to what was being said outside.

Their conversations was mostly about whether or not they would be able to impress the grand sages from the resources gathered, giving them the opportunity to stand out from their peers.

From their words, the Moulan mortals seemed to worship the spell warriors with admiration and reverence as if they were a kind of god. They even believed it to be extremely honorable even if they died in service to these spell warriors.

When Han Li heard this, he inwardly sighed and swept his hand, sealing off the interior of the cart from the outside with a barrier of faint azure light. The voices of the Moulan came to an abrupt stop.

“Silvermoon, how about you talk about what you have gained. From your excitement, you should've acquired many good items!” Han Li's sleeve began to stir and a small white fox flew out from the cuff, circling once in the air before landing in front of him

The small fox laid down on the ground and chuckled, “I'm not

too sure how valuable these items are, but Master should know. There were many ancient treasures on the first floor, but because I wasn't capable of concealing their spiritual Qi as I used my movement techniques, I didn't take any of them. However, there were six ancient boxes on the second floor and I took half of them."

"Hehe! I initially thought to take away most of them, but if there were too few of them, it would attract too much suspicion, so I only ended up taking three."

Afterwards, the fox spat out three translucent jade boxes in front of Han Li.

Han Li then took out a jade box from his waist. The jade boxes in front of him appeared exactly the same as the one the Marquis had tossed to him.

Han Li caressed the jade box in his hand and faintly smiled, "Master Cang Kun left behind a total of six jade boxes and four of them are in my possession. It seems it was a correct decision to go."

Silvermoon sighed from her lingering fear, "Master, your courage is quite great. You took hidden action despite having so many Nascent Soul cultivators present, and had me enter first. Did you not fear being discovered?"

Han Li smiled and glanced at the small fox, "Hehe! What was there to fear? At worst, I would merely use Bloodshadow Evasion to flee them. Besides, I was almost completely certain I would succeed. When I used the spiritual light to conceal your entrance, none were the wiser.

I was most concerned that you wouldn't be able to conceal yourself after you had taken the treasure. It would've been terrible if they had detected you, but it seems your evasion techniques were far more effective than I could have anticipated."

Silvermoon calmly smiled and said, "Master jests. Although the

evasion techniques of the Silvermoon Wolf Clans are great, the most important factor was concealing the jade boxes' spiritual Qi within my body. It is an entirely different matter whether or not I could've concealed myself from those old eccentrics' spiritual sense."

Han Li gently smiled and didn't further pursue the matter. Instead, azure light began to shine from the palm he placed on the jade box. He then exerted force on his hand and the box began to reveal a trace of white light. Soon after, a majority of the azure light had been cleanly absorbed by the box.

With a clack, the box was easily opened and revealed a faint blue jade slip within.

Han Li gazed at the jade slip for a short moment and took a breath before taking the jade slip into his hands and solemnly immersing his spiritual sense within it.

The small fox stared at Han Li, its eyes brimming with excitement.

As time slowly passed by, Han Li's face retained a calm expression. Silvermoon blinked, puzzled as to why this was.

A short moment later, Han Li's expression stirred as he withdrew his spiritual sense from the jade slip. He frowned and muttered to himself for a moment. A short moment later, he unfurrowed his brow and calmly placed away the jade slip and reached for the second box, uninterested in mentioning the contents of the jade slip.

While Silvermoon was greatly curious, she tactfully remained silent on the matter.

Han Li opened the second box using the same method as the first. This time, the box contained an exquisitely crafted ring. It was dim and jet-black.

Silvermoon astonishedly asked, "Is that an ancient treasure?"

“It doesn’t seem to be. It isn’t emitting much spiritual Qi.” Han Li also seemed uncertain as to what it was. He casually picked it up with his fingers and began to take a closer look at it.

After glancing at it several times and scanning it with his spiritual sense, he decisively said, “The material is somewhat odd. It should only be a common magic tool, but its hard to say its use.”

“It is only a magic tool?” A trace of disappointment flickered from Silvermoon’s eyes.

Han Li appeared indifferent and didn’t reveal the slightest dejection, “Don’t worry. Since Master Cang Kun kept it inside a jade box like this, it is certain to have a specific purpose. Perhaps it will prove useful in the future.”

Silvermoon tilted her head and excitedly said, “Master, how about taking a look at what’s inside the other two boxes.”

# Chapter 707: Encountering Old Acquaintances

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Han Li opened each of the remaining boxes one by one. One had a small green bottle while another had a fist-sized chunk of something that glowed with purple light.

Han Li casually opened the green bottle and took a whiff of it. An extremely sharp and caustic scent assailed his nose, causing Han Li's to grimace. He hurriedly closed the bottle of what seemed to be venom and glanced at the small bottle with an odd expression before cautiously putting it away.

In the end, his gaze fell onto the purple object. He squeezed it with his fingers and found it to be extremely soft. Strands of light occasionally shimmered from the purple object, creating a dazzling sight.

“Yi!” Han Li yelped with astonishment. He then concentrated his spiritual sense onto the object and deeply examined it.

A short moment later, his hand suddenly trembled and the purple ball turned into a purple cloud. It circled once above Han Li’s head before dropping into Han Li’s hand in its original form. It appeared to be layered like a net of glistening purple threads that were as thin as could be. It appeared to be a rare treasure of some sort.

When Silvermoon saw the purple net, she spoke with amazement, “Isn’t this a Purple Cloudlace? It is an ancient treasure that was renowned even times of antiquity.”

Joy flickered from Han Li’s eyes and he excitedly asked, “You know what this is? Since it was renowned, could it be a divine spirit treasure?”

Silvermoon enthusiastically said, “No. Although the Purple Cloudlace is a top grade ancient treasure, it is far lacking compared

to divine spirit treasures. But with regards to its defensive abilities, it is incredibly flexible and malleable. Depending how well it was refined, the treasure can be used to cover an area of several hundred meters to several kilometers. It is a truly rare large scale defensive treasure. It is said that the greatest Purple Cloudlace could protect everything within fifty kilometers. Though, I don't know how true this is. Of course, it is also incredibly effective at trapping enemies. As for offensive abilities, it is capable of releasing Jadesun True Fire to extinguish foes."

A trace of disappointment appeared on his face, but soon he wore an odd expression, "Silvermoon, you seem quite knowledgeable of this Purple Cloudlace. Could it be that you've seen it before?"

When Silvermoon heard this, she grew silent for a moment. A while later, she wryly smiled and said, "Now that Master mentioned it, I recalled a fragment of my memory before I was refined into an artifact spirit. There seemed to be one particular Purple Cloudlace that I knew off quite well."

As Silvermoon spoke, her expression appeared pensive. She then shook her head and gave up as if the memory was out of grasp.

"Since this Purple Cloudlace is so fearsome and I've never heard of Master Cang Kun making use of this treasure, this was most likely something that he had acquired from Devilfall Valley. It is a pity that none of the jade boxes that were acquired possessed any information on Devilfall Valley. It should be contained in Marquis Nanlong's two jade boxes. How truly unfortunate." Han Li laughed at himself but he didn't truly appear dejected.

He clearly understood that he would have the opportunity to acquire more treasures if he acquired the secrets of Devilfall Valley, but at the same time, he would become a huge target. So long as information of this was divulged, who knew how many great powers and eccentrics would come knocking on his door. It was hard to say whether or not the advantages would outweigh the detriments."

Silvermoon couldn't help but ask, "Master, did that jade slip not contain them?"

Since Silvermoon asked, Han Li answered her with an insipid tone, "The jade slip contained the cultivation art and techniques of Master Cang Kun. Although I cannot cultivate the main cultivation art, the Whole Moon Arts, there are several secret techniques and a few cultivation insights that I am able to make much use of."

When Silvermoon heard this, she sighed and appeared dejected.

At that moment, Han Li put away all the items and boxes. After giving Silvermoon a brief word, Han Li closed his eyes and began to meditate. Silvermoon then drew close to Han Li's body and curled up. She then opened her bright black eyes and began to mindlessly stare at an empty corner of the cart.

As the army of Moulan mortals slowly advanced, two days had passed. During that time, two groups of spell warriors had conducted a search of the army. However, Han Li was awakened by Silvermoon each time and he was able to easily conceal himself from these low grade spell warriors.

Since the cart Han Li chose contained insignificant items, none of the Moulan mortals had bothered to check it.

Once the army left the Moulan Plains, Han Li stealthily took off with Silvermoon in his grasp. He took a route different from the army, heading straight in the direction of the Heavenly South.

With his vast spiritual sense, Han Li was able to detect any spell warriors within fifty kilometers, allowing him to easily avoid them as he smoothly made his way through the desert and into the Nine Nations Union's State of Fengyuan.

The State of Fengyuan was one of the three countries that was closest to the Moulan Plains. The mountains on their border were normally garrisoned with cultivators of the Nine Nations Alliance.

But after Han Li spent several days inside the State of Fengyuan,

he hadn't encountered a single cultivator, but he had encountered many patrols of spell warriors. It was clear that the Nine Nations Unions had found their initial battle against the Moulan spell warriors unfavorable and decided to retreat for the time being. The true battle shouldn't have started yet.

Without further thought, Han Li hurried his way through a particularly desolate area.

After a smooth eventless flight for four days, he suddenly turned his head to look at a small obscure mountain with an expression of shock. Soon, his face changed between various different expressions.

Just a moment ago, he had detected an area with fierce spiritual Qi fluctuations that faintly contained vicious intent. It was clear that there was a battle between high grade cultivators.

Since a battle was taking place here, it was likely to be a cultivator fighting against a spell warrior.

With some further examination, Han Li discovered that there were five Core Formation stage combatants staking their all against a Nascent Soul eccentric.

Amongst these Core Formation stage combatants, there were a few with auras that Han Li found slightly familiar. After a moment of consideration, Han Li couldn't figure out who it was. After a moment of hesitation, Han Li wasn't able to suppress his curiosity and flew over.

With Han Li's exceptional movement techniques, Han Li was able to cover this short distance in the blink of an eye. Once he arrived, he saw various-colored lights fill the sky along with the sound of harsh explosions. The battle was greatly fierce.

The five variously dressed Core Formation cultivators were currently fighting against an early Nascent Soul stage spell warrior. Although the five Core Formation cultivators were

fighting with all their strength and were controlling their magic treasures with perfection, the yellow-robed, bald spell warrior was slowly pushing back the cultivators with circles of yellow mist.

The spell warrior wore a fierce expression. Although he hadn't released his own magic treasure, his fantastical techniques and deep cultivation allowed him to easily deal with them. Were it not for the fact there was a gorgeous woman amongst the Core Formation cultivators, the Nascent Soul cultivator likely wouldn't have held back and would've already finished them all off.

Although Han Li found this woman familiar, his gaze focused on the fat old man amongst the cultivators. This old man was spirally with silver lightning and was controlling a huge sword magic treasure that repeatedly emitted lightning. He was the strongest amongst the group of five.

Han Li recognized the old man's appearance and cultivation art, and wore a complicated expression. He muttered, "It's him? To think that there are such coincidences in this world!"

After the yellow-robed cultivator battled for such a long period of time, he lost his patience and fiercely glared at the gorgeous woman, "Girl, it seems you cannot recognize my good intentions. Were it not for the fact my cultivation art requires an outstanding cultivation vessel, I wouldn't have spared you for so long. If you don't surrender yourself to me, don't blame me for being ruthless."

Once he said this, he spat out a yellow feather. It glowed brilliantly and had something faintly drawn on it. The bald cultivator then took it into his hand.

When the fat old man and the others saw this, their expressions vastly changed, knowing that things were far from good. They clearly understood that the spell warrior had been holding back, but they didn't dare to retreat, else they would easily be picked off by the spell warrior. Their chances of survival would be even

worse than fighting him together.

As such, the five bitterly cursed in their minds and could only muster the entirety of their magic power to attack the spell warrior. For a time, the might of their magic treasures were greatly increased and they were able to forcefully beat back the yellow mist and regain some of their momentum.

This infuriated the bald spell warrior. He tossed his feather into the air and spat a mist of yellow Qi onto the magic treasure and began to utter incantations.

The feather trembled for a moment and gently fanned in the direction of the cultivators. Suddenly, a large whistle sounded through the air and a deep yellow gale followed in the direction that the feather had fanned. In an instant, the gale turned into a hundred meter tall tornado and completely engulfed the five Core Formation cultivators.

# Chapter 708: Constrained Spirit Earth Dragons

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The fearsome, earth-shaking gales caused the magic treasures to unsteadily sway. They seemed to be restricted by the gale and were incapable of breaking free.

The bald spell warrior wore a bizarre smile and revealed an expression of pride. “Haha! If you won’t accept my kindness then I will use force. How reckless! Don’t expect me to stop after matters have reached this far.” The bald spell warrior then grabbed the air and suddenly formed a huge hand from the yellow wings. It then made its way to grab the gorgeous woman.

The spell warriors planned to first grab the woman to make sure she lived and instantly exterminate the remaining four through a full display of his power.

The woman attempted to make use of her blazing flame sword magic treasure to block the large hand, but the gales had caused it to spin out of control. With no way of controlling it, she was incapable of saving herself, causing her complexion to pale.

Although the four cultivators wished to rescue the woman, they were disoriented and swept away by the wind. Only the fat old man with the deepest cultivation amongst them was able to deal with it somewhat better. In his worry, he forcefully raised his hand and released a meter long bolt of lightning to strike at the giant hand. However, the attack was completely ineffective.

When the yellow hand was only three meters away from grabbing the woman, it suddenly disappeared. At that same moment, the yellow-robed spell warrior roared in furious alarm. The windstorm that trapped the Core Formation cultivator suddenly weakened before soon disappearing. It was as if what had just happened as only an illusion.

The group of cultivators looked at each other with dismay and turned their gaze towards the bald spell warrior. However, he was angrily staring in an direction that was completely empty. They couldn't help but reveal astonishment.

A fierce expression appeared on the spell warrior's face and he furiously shouted, "Since you've dared to break my technique, why would you so stealthily hide yourself?" He seemed to no longer pay the Core Formation cultivators any notice.

A man's voice voice leisurely spoke, "It isn't that I'm hiding myself, but it's just that your cultivation is too lacking to see me. It seems your esteemed self should've just recently entered Nascent Soul stage. You are far weaker than other spell warriors I've seen."

In an azure flash of light, a youth with a common appearance appeared before them.

When he saw that the five cultivators were caught in a desperate situation, he released an azure essence sword streak towards the feather. Once it was struck, the windstowm was easily dissolved.

The five were initially alarmed by Han Li's appearance, but after sensing that he was at Nascent Soul Stage, they rejoiced, knowing that their lives were saved.

The female cultivator promptly saluted him from a distance and respectfully said, "Junior's name is Nie Ying. Many thanks for Senior's rescue."

"Nie Ying!" When Han Li heard this, he couldn't help but take another look at the woman. He faintly remembered her.

However, now was not the time to deal with this, and he simply waved his arm, having the woman cease her salute. The woman and the old man didn't seem to recognize him. It came as no surprise. In the past, he only met each of them once. Now that almost two hundred years had passed, it wasn't odd that they didn't recognize him.

With that thought, Han Li turned his gaze to the yellow-robed spell warrior and flatly said, “Since your esteemed self hasn’t run, it seems you wish to take me on?”

When the bald spell warrior heard this, he furiously smiled and heartily laughed, “Your esteemed self is also but an early Nascent Soul cultivator. Your words may be bold but I must oblige you to demonstrate your abilities.”

With that said, the bald spell warrior formed a incantation gesture and he flicked his finger downward, shooting out two shining yellow pellets.

Han Li was faintly surprised by this and didn’t stop him. He merely narrowed his eyes and watched with interest.

The large man was inwardly delighted to see that Han Li remained idle and promptly uttered an incantation. His body was then covered with surging yellow clouds.

With a imposing voice, he softly shouted, “Rise!”

When Han Li heard this, his heart stirred as he expectantly glanced around him, but he saw nothing appear. In his doubt, he suddenly heard faint rumbling from the ground. The rumbling soon became thunderous and world-quaking.

Han Li swept his spiritual sense to the ground and revealed slight astonishment. Without any further thought, he swept his sleeve, sending two ten meter long swordstreaks out from his cuff down towards the sound’s origin.

Han Li frowned. Although the sword streaks struck, they were ineffective.

With a rustle of wind, two forty-meter-long horned yellow dragons flew out from the ground and shot towards the bald cultivator. They then surrounded the bald cultivator and continuously revolved around him as if to protect him.

“This is? Han Li was amazed to discover the two fearsome yellow

dragons were entirely formed from earth. They appeared as if they were truly alive. This lifelike aura seemed to originate from the yellow pellet on top of their heads. It pulsed with light, releasing a demonic yellow radiance.

“Hehe! Your esteemed self will be the first to witness the might of my constrained spirit beasts. Go!” The bald spell warrior furiously smiled and struck the earth dragons with yellow spell seals. The dragons subsequently charged towards Han Li with overbearing force.

Han Li furrowed his brow and lightly sighed. He opened his mouth and spat out a sliver of Celestial Ice Flames. The sliver of flames split into two even thinner flames and accurately struck the heads of each of the earth dragons.

The flames crackled and instantly enveloped the earth dragons in a layer of ice. The ice sculptures stopped ten meters in front of Han Li before dropping towards the earth.

Then with a flash of azure light, there were two clear explosions. The two frozen earth dragons had been easily shattered by two sword streaks that Han Li flung. Afterwards, he raised his hand and calmly summoned the two yellow pellets into his hand. He took a glance at them before placing them into his storage pouch.

Han Li leisurely said, “What other abilities do you have? Please don’t hesitate to use them. I wish to see the true might of the spell warriors’ spirit techniques!”

Silence looked over the yellow clouds for a moment as the spell warrior was shocked to the core at Han Li’s effortless disposal of his two earth dragons.

A moment later, the spell warrior’s sullen voice suddenly left the yellow clouds, “What sect do you come from? Might I know of your distinguished name? You don’t seem to match the description of any better known cultivators. Don’t tell me you also entered Nascent Soul stage in the last hundred years?” The last question

was uttered with a savage tone.

“I am a nameless individual. If I said my name, you wouldn’t know of it. Since Fellow Daoist doesn’t intend to attack, I won’t be polite.” Han Li’s expression grew sullen and he slapped the spirit beast pouch at his waist, releasing countless glistening golden flying insects into the air. They were the pure Gold Devouring Beetles that Han Li had meticulously nurtured.

This would be the first time that Han Li would be using them against an enemy. He wished to test how effective they would be against a Nascent Soul stage opponent.

“Gold Devouring Beetles! You actually possess them? And so many!?” Much to Han Li’s surprise, the yellow-robed spell warrior shouted the name of these insects with a voice of terror before Han Li could order the attack.

Without another word, the yellow-robed cultivator turned around and tore through the skies as a streak of yellow light. His swiftness had caused Han Li to hesitate and abandon the idea of pursuing him.

He wasn’t confident in being able to exterminate a Nascent Soul cultivator that was wholeheartedly focused on fleeing. Once a Nascent Soul manifested, even the lightning movement technique was lacking in speed to match it.

However, the bald spell warrior was able to recognize his Gold Devouring Beetles despite having somewhat inferior cultivation. It was truly shocking.

Although he felt somewhat puzzled, Han Li dropped the matter and recalled his still untested Spirit Beast Pouch. Afterwards, he slowly flew towards the Core Formation cultivators with a calm expression.

Before the Han Li drew close to them, the fat old man took the initiative to fly forward and deeply saluted him, “Many thanks for

your assistance, Senior! Might Junior know your esteemed name? Junior is Yellow Maple Valley's Lei Wanhe. We cannot thank you enough!"

In addition to Nie Yan who had introduced herself before, the others began to salute Han Li as well with gratitude and respect.

"The Giant Sword Sect's Shi Qiyun, Masked Moon Sect's Tang Minghua, Heavenly Imperial Fortress' Qian Huan pays their respects to Senior."

# Chapter 709: Lei Wanhe's Shock

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"Senior!" Han Li stroked his chin and wore an odd expression on his face.

The fat old man was the "Senior Martial Uncle Lei" who had exchanged medicinal herbs for pill formulas. Although he was merely observing the common customs of the cultivation world, Han Li couldn't help but find this action odd.

As for the gorgeous woman named Nie Yan, he had only met her once as "Senior Martial Sister Nie" before when she had protected the Murong Brothers from "Senior Martial Brother Lu" back during his time at Yellow Maple Valley. Although Han Li didn't have much of a relationship with her, he had heard much of her aptitude and her beauty both external and within. Back in the past, there had been countless male disciples that had admired her. He didn't expect that after so many years, she would form a golden core.

Han Li remained silent and examined both Lei Wanhe and Nie Yan with a complicated expression. As this occurred, Lei Wanhe felt puzzled.

Not only did this "Senior" appear excessively young, for some unknown reason, Lei Wanhe found his face somewhat familiar as if he had saw him before. This had come as a shock to him and he began to feel apprehensive.

As Nie Yan looked at Han Li, bewilderment suddenly appeared from deep within her eyes.

Han Li was disinclined from wasting any more time with this silent display and eventually said, "It seems Martial Uncle Lei truly doesn't remember me. However, the pill formulas Martial Uncle gave to me during that year had been of great help to me."

When Lei Wanhe heard Han Li call him Martial Uncle, his jaw

dropped and found himself at a loss for words. But after he heard him mention pill formulas, he suddenly recalled something and began to astonishedly stutter, “Martial Uncle? Pill formulas! You... You’re...”

When the others heard this, they were also dumbstruck. This Nascent Soul Senior had actually called Lei Wanhe “Martial Uncle”. This had truly sent their minds spiralling into confusion.

But when Nie Yan heard him, she amazedly examined Han Li once more before saying, “You’re Martial Uncle Li’s disciple, Han Li... Junior Martial Brother Han?” The woman’s voice was filled with disbelief.

Han Li felt genuine surprise, “I didn’t expect that Fellow Daoist Nie would remember me.”

While Han Li was unknown during Qi Condensation stage due to his low profile and meager cultivation, truly few knew of him. But ever since he survived the [trial by blood and fire] and successfully became Li Huayuan’s disciple after entering Foundation Establishment, many shrewd individuals had taken notice of him. This “Senior Martial Sister Nie” was one of them.

Once the Six Devilish Dao Sects invaded the State of Yue, his reputation surged throughout lower grade disciples from his achievements in killing so many similar grade Devil Dao cultivators. Although she hadn’t seen his face since then, he had left a deep impression on her. With Han Li’s appearance exactly the same as before, she recalled the famous Junior martial brother Han from the past and unconsciously shouted out his name in shock.

“You truly are Martial Nephew Han!” Lei Wanhe felt his throat turn dry and his mind grew blank.

It was said that any strange events could happen in the cultivation world. Outstanding disciples rising to the same status as a senior was a common occurrence, but for a Foundation

Establishment Junior to suddenly reappear at Nascent Soul stage was something that brought an individual as experienced as Lei Wanhe into a stupor.

Han Li glanced around and calmly said, “Martial Uncle Lei, there is no need to be so surprised. However, this isn’t the place to talk. Let’s have a chat as we travel instead.”

Lei Wanhe’s expression wavered several times before bitterly chuckling, “I don’t dare to accept the title as Martial Uncle. Since Senior Han has already entered Nascent Soul sage, I am your Junior.” His words still preserved the same respect from the very start.

Regardless of Han Li’s identity in the past, his current cultivation was far beyond his own. He didn’t dare to be addressed with such an inappropriate title.

The other three cultivators finally realized the relationship between Han Li and Wan Tianhe. After glancing at each other in dismay, weird expressions appeared on each of their faces.

Han Li didn’t pay this much heed. After a moment of silence, he nodded his head, “Since Fellow Daoist Lei says this, I won’t be polite. Let us immediately depart from here. Your speed is all rater slow, so I will be bringing you.

Once that was said, Han Li slapped his storage pouch and a small, exquisite item appeared in his hand. Once he flung it into the air, a squarish item appeared before them in a flash of red light.

Under control of spell seals, the Wind Riding Chariot quickly grew larger and appeared over thirty meters wide.

“Get in the chariot!” Han Li bluntly ordered them. Lei Wanhe and the others naturally didn’t have any objections and they all flew into the chariot with a blur.

Once Han Li stepped onto the Wind Riding Chariot, he began to infuse the chariot with his spiritual power. After gently trembling

for a moment, it tore through the skies as a streak of white light. With its exceeding speed, it disappeared from sight in the blink of an eye.

The speed of the Wind Riding Chariot delighted the others. At this speed, the spell warriors wouldn't be able to pursue them, relieving them of worry that was on their minds.

As Han Li drove the Wind Riding Chariot, he casually asked, "Fellow Daoists, the State of Fengyuan should've already fallen into the grasp of the spell warriors. Why were you there and how did you come to be blocked by a Nascent Soul spell warrior? If that area weren't so remote, it wouldn't have been easy to escape even if I took action."

When the five heard this, they glanced at each other with various expression. The clear leader of their party, Lei Wanhe, hesitated for a moment before answering, "Senior might not know this, but we didn't act out of our free will. We were under orders from the Nine Nations Union to carry-out an important task. As a result, we were occupied for several days and were present during the Moulan invasion.

Helpless, we could only choose a remote route and fly back, however, we encountered a few low grade spell warriors along the way and had no choice but to kill them. But who could've possibly known that there was a Nascent Soul spell warrior that was located nearby. Just as we finished killing the last low grade spell warrior, we were discovered by the old eccentric and were chased down.

Although we knew we weren't a match, if we scattered, we would've only met our end sooner, so we could only do our utmost. It was only by a fluke that Senior Han came our way, else we would've met our end."

As Lei Wanhe spoke with gratitude, he examined this "Martial Nephew Han". To tell the truth, he still felt as if all that happened was a dream.

When Han Li heard this, he lost interest and indifferently grunted. A short moment later, he then asked, “Fellow Daoist Lei, is my master Li Huayuan still doing well?”

As there was no point in concealing the matter, Lei Wanhe honestly answered, “Senior Han, Junior martial brother Li died a hundred years ago in the war with the Moulan spell warriors. As for his wife, she wasn’t able to form a golden core and reached the end of her lifespan.”

Han Li was slightly shaken by his words and revealed a trace of sadness. He then asked, “Were my Fellow Martial Brothers and Sisters able to form a golden core?”

Lei Wanhe sighed and said, “No, although three of Junior martial brother Li’s disciples had exceptional aptitude and entered false core stage, they weren’t fated to form a golden core.”

Han Li grew silent for a moment. The appearances of Yu Kun, Song Meng, Zhong Weiniang, and the others appeared through his mind. Past events slowly began to appear.

A moment later, he took a deep breath. Since his Martial Brothers and Sisters were unable to form a golden core, he didn’t further ask about them. It was likely that they died during meditation. His time spent at Yellow Maple Valley seemed as if it had all happened in an old dream.

At that moment, Nie Yan suddenly said, “Senior Han, would you happen to be interested in rejoining Yellow Maple Valley?”

Han Li raised his brow and immediately answered, “Return to Yellow Maple Valley? I have no such interest. I’ve already become an elder of the Heavenly Dao Alliance’s Drifting Cloud Sect, and I am satisfied there.”

Disappointment appeared from Nie Yan’s expression and Lei Wanhe’s expression wavered.

As for the other three, they didn’t dare to speak as they were

unfamiliar with Han Li.

After a moment of hesitation, Nie Yan then asked, “Would Senior happen to recognize Xiao Cui’er?”

Han Li was stunned for a moment. He asked with an odd expression, “Xiao Cui’er? Of course I do, you know that little girl?” At that same moment, the appearance of that young, strange-spirited girl came to mind.

# Chapter 710: Information on Nangong Wan

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Han Li had a deep impression of the young girl he had recommended to join Yellow Maple Valley. But soon after, he recalled the small old man that had accepted her as a disciple, Senior Martial Brother Ma. When Han Li recalled him, he felt a trace of sadness.

That small old man couldn't have formed a golden core given his age, but he was the one who Han Li shared the deepest friendship with at Yellow Maple Valley. Odds were that he already passed away.

With both feigned annoyance and delight, she faintly smiled and said, "Little girl! Junior Martial Sister Xiao is no longer some little girl. She is already married and entered Core Formation stage several tens of years ago."

Once Han Li recovered from his surprise, he smiled and said, "Oh, she also entered Core Formation? Now that is surprising."

Nie Ying gently said, "I have heard Junior Martial Sister Xiao speak several times about how Senior drew her into the sect. Junior martial sister Xiao always felt deep gratitude and concern for Senior Han."

Han Li's smile faded away and he insipidly said, "At the time, I simply introduced her to Senior martial brother Ma because her aptitude was good, nothing more. It is now only a matter of the past."

Nie Yan and Lei Wanhe could only bitterly smile at each other in silence at her failed efforts in an attempt to make Han Li rejoin the sect.

As for the reason why Han Li was unwilling to rejoin, the two could guess. During the year the core disciples joined the Nine Nations Union, since Han Li wasn't amongst them because he was

but a minor Foundation Establishment disciple, he was grouped up to be bait and was abandoned. It was no wonder why he felt so detached towards Yellow Maple Valley and had no intention of returning.

As the two had nothing better to say, Han Li suddenly asked the middle-aged Masked Moon cultivator, “Did you have a female cultivator by the name of Nangong Wan? How is she now?” Han Li’s voice suddenly grew gloomy.

The middle-aged man named Tang Minghua was surprised and he soon respectfully replied, “Ah! Senior knows Martial Aunt Nangong? She is currently overseeing the sect and is doing well.”

In Han Li’s shock, he wasn’t able to conceal a trace of joy, “Martial Aunt? She already entered Nascent Soul stage?”

“Martial Aunt Nangong successfully entered Nascent Soul stage over a hundred years ago, and she is now an elder of our sect. Is Senior an old friend of Martial Aunt Nangong?”

Han Li sighed and his eyes became dim, “Old friend? It could be considered so. I received great kindness from your Martial Aunt in the past, and I’ve always wanted to meet her again. It’s a shame that I was occupied with so many matters over the year and I’ve never had the opportunity.”

“Hehe! Although Martial Aunt Nangong rarely sees guests, Senior should be able to easily see her. In three months, Martial Aunt Nangong will marry the Flowing Mind Sect’s Elder Wei, and their Dao Companion Ceremony will officiallize them as pair cultivators. This celebration originally only invited high grade cultivators of the Nine Nations Union, but since Senior is her old friend, he will certainly...”

Han Li felt his mind buzz and he couldn’t hear anything else the middle-aged man said. He suddenly faced the Masked Moon Sect cultivator and coldly asked, “Dao Companion Ceremony?”

“Yes, she plans on marrying Elder Wei Lichen of the Flowing Mind Sect, who formed a Nascent Soul three hundred years ago and possesses profound abilities. He is a cultivation genius who didn’t come from the Heavenly South. Both of our sects spent much effort to make this matter possible.”

Han Li’s icy expression frightened the middle-aged cultivator. All kinds of strange thoughts began to well up inside him but under Han Li’s freezing gaze, he couldn’t help but continue to speak.

Lei Wanhe and the others revealed an odd expression. Even an idiot could tell that the relationship between Han Li and Nangong Wan wasn’t so simple! Why else would Han Li have such a strong reaction upon hearing this?

Must to the others’ surprise, Han Li’s icy expression lasted only a moment more before suddenly disappearing. With a gentle tone, he said, “There is no need for Fellow Daoist Tang to be afraid. I have no evil intentions. I merely heard that an old love of mine is about to become someone else’s woman and I became somewhat restless. Now that I know of this matter, I will naturally have to celebrate my good friend’s ceremony.”

The middle-aged cultivator sighed in relief at seeing Han Li so calm and repeatedly uttered words of welcome.

However, Han Li only replied with a slight smile.

The others in the chariot were also relieved. After all, the Six Sects of Yue were now practically one united existence. They didn’t wish for anything to happen to one another.

Following this, Han Li casually asked a few more questions related to the Six Sects of Yue. Since the matters weren’t important, the five were able to answer all of them. But when he heard that the Yellow Maple Valley Ancestor Lingu had reached the end of his lifespan, Han Li frowned for just a moment and quickly unfurrowed his brow as if he hadn’t heard this.

Han Li suddenly recalled something and asked, “Ah yes, your Martial Aunt Nangong should have a younger cousin by the name of Nangong Bing. She should also be a cultivator of the Masked Moon Sect.”

The middle-aged cultivator seemed confused and asked, “Nangong Bing? Senior must’ve heard wrong! Martial Aunt Nangong was always a solitary figure. I’ve never heard of a younger cousin. Is Senior not mistaken?”

When Han Li heard this, he was dumbfounded. After taking a deep breath, he urgently asked, “Nangong Bing should’ve been a female Core Formation cultivator of your sect! Could it be that you don’t remember?”

Tang Minghua wryly smiled, “If this person truly belongs to our sect, this Junior would definitely know of it. I can pledge with certainty that there is no such woman in our sect.”

With an astonished expression Lei Wanhe couldn’t help but interrupt, “Fellow Daoist Tang speaks the truth. We would know if such a Core Formation cultivator existed in the Masked Moon Sect. Where did Senior come to learn of this person?”

“It’s nothing! I merely had a misunderstanding!” Although Han Li said this, he was flabbergasted and appeared to be at a loss.

Han Li now knew that Nangong Bing wasn’t the cousin of Nangong Wan, but was Nangong Wan herself with the use of some appearance alterations. It was no wonder why she hadn’t treated him so ruthlessly or why she had such a queer expression when they departed.

After that, Han Li completely lost interest in further discussion and simply dropped the chariot forward with a gloomy expression. When the others saw that this Senior Han wasn’t in a good mood, they didn’t dare to carelessly chat.

For a time, the Wind Riding Chariot was completely silent.

Less than half a day later, Han Li stopped the Wind Riding Chariot at some nameless mountain.

Han Li stood up and calmly said, “We will have to part here. This place is only a day away from the border of the State of Fengyuan. It should be safe here. I have matters that I must attend to and I cannot continue to keep you company.”

Lei Wanhe and the others didn’t dare to say anything else and simply thanked Han Li once more for saving their life before flying out of the Wind Riding Chariot.

Han Li didn’t say a single word more and promptly turned the chariot before disappearing off the horizon in the blink of an eye.

The older Heavenly Imperial Fortress cultivator surnamed Qian saw that the Wind Riding Chariot had disappeared from sight and couldn’t help but ask, “Fellow Daoist Lei, is it true that Senior Han was once a disciple of your Yellow Maple Valley and was your Martial Nephew in the past?”

Lei Wanhe frowned and annoyedly said, “What, do you think I’m someone who speaks empty words?”

Although his life had been saved by Han Li, his past junior’s cultivation now vastly exceeded his own and he became a genuine Senior. Given how careful he had to be, he couldn’t help but be in a bad mood.

“Hehe! There is no need for Brother Lei to be angry. I simply found it odd. If Fellow Daoist spoke truthfully, Senior Han should be around the same age as Fellow Daoist Nie. Fellow Daoist Nie, how long have you been cultivating?” Cultivator Qian asked earnestly.

As if realizing what he asked, Nie Yan answered with a changed expression, “I cultivated for two hundred years before reaching early Core Formation stage.”

Cultivator Qian rubbed his chin and sternly said, “It seems

Senior Han spent only two hundred years before condensing a Nascent Soul. Do you know what this means?"

The Giant Sword Sect cultivator couldn't help but shout in surprise, "Could it be Brother Qian means..."

Cultivator Qian solemnly said, "That's right. It is quite possible this person may reach Deity Transformation stage. It had been tens of thousands of years since this last happened.

Although cultivators who reach Deity Transformation stage soon disappear from this world, each of them were unrivaled in the short time they were here. The entire Heavenly South, be they Righteous, Devilish, or even neutral, all unite during this time as there is none capable of withstanding an early Deity Transformation stage cultivator.

# Chapter 711: Han Lis Determination

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After some thought, Nie Yan smiled and said, “Brother Qian must be exaggerating. Although Fellow Daoist Han managed to reach Nascent Soul stage in such a short amount of time, reaching Deity Transformation is still a matter far out of reach. It isn’t so easily done. In fact, so long as he reaches late Nascent Soul stage, he is able to proclaim his own sect a hegemon of their side. That seems much more likely.”

With a spirited glint appearing from his eyes, the cultivator surnamed Qian slowly said, “Hehe! I merely think too much. If Senior Han doesn’t come across any mishap, he’ll surely become a greatly influential character in the Heavenly South. Given the deep ties he has to Yellow Maple Valley, if he joins, I reckon it won’t be long before we can reclaim the State of Yue.”

After a moment of silence, Lei Wanhe sighed and said, “Relationship? Fellow Daoist just saw that although Senior Han originally came from our Yellow Maple Valley, he is now the elder of the Heavenly Dao Alliance’s Drifting Cloud Sect. Moreover, he doesn’t have any intention of returning. Regardless of what sect power he belongs to, Yellow Maple Valley will not be able to rope him in.”

Once that was said, the others were at a loss for words.

The Giant Sword Sect cultivator doubtfully said, “Why does Senior Han treat your sect as such? After all, that was where he came from. Does he have intention of paying back what the sect has done for him?”

Lei Wanhe shook his head and said, “I cannot divulge the specifics, but the odds aren’t good. However, from how I see it, his relationship with the Masked Moon Sect Senior Nangong seems deep. Perhaps Senior Nangong can try talking with him. Even if he will not rejoin our six sects, a good relationship can still be

formed.”

Tang Minghua doubtfully said, “This... is possible. I’ll have to go back to the sect and inquire about the relationship between Senior Han and Martial Aunt Nangong.”

“Leave it be. Roping in a Nascent Soul stage cultivator isn’t something that we can handle. Have the elders deal with it. This Senior Han should appear at the ceremony in three months,” Lei Wanhe then glanced around him and frowned, “Regardless, let’s hurry back to the Nine Nations Union. It isn’t safe here.”

When the others heard this, the five ceased their chat and took to the skies.

Although Lei Wanhe spoke with an effortless tone, he became inwardly worried.

How could he inform Ancestor Ling Hu of this matter? Could he just say that a disciple he had abandoned in the past had become an existence as powerful as the ancestor himself? Moreover, that matter had caused Han Li to resent Yellow Maple Valley. Wouldn’t telling his Martial Senior this be the same as directly rebuking him?

He could only helplessly sigh several times along the journey before gloomily continuing on his way.

Because the Wind Riding Chariot was far too eye-catching, once Han Li was out of sight from Lei Wanhe and the others, he put away the chariot and began to fly using ordinary light.

Now that he suddenly acquired news on Nangong Wan, and bad at that, he needed to calm his himself and have a long thought about the subject.

Back in the past, they only had intercourse once and he only saw her two times. Because there was such a vast difference in their cultivation, they simply acted as indifferent strangers. But at some unknown time, Han Li had unconsciously thought of Nangong

Wan as his own woman.

With the successful formation of his golden core and Nascent Soul, Han Li recognized himself as being worthy of Nangong Wang and this idea was even further cemented in his mind. As a result, he had nearly lost his sensibilities once he heard that Nangong Wan was about to become Dao companions with someone else.

Pretending not to know that Nangong Wan was marrying someone else was something that Han Li couldn't possibly do. The only man who could marry her in this lifetime was Han Li.

Moreover, he was convinced that as the man who took Nangong Wan's vital yin, she should have some semblance of feeling for him as well. He definitely couldn't allow the celebration to smoothly carry out.

He was currently pondering about whether he should directly head to the Masked Moon Sect and stealthily steal Nangong Wan away or crash the celebration three months later.

These two methods clearly had their own advantages.

Although the first method was easier to carry out, he truly doubted whether or not Nangong Wan would leave with him without objection. After all, she had stayed at the Masked Moon Sect for many years and had become an elder of her sect. There was no way she wouldn't have any apprehensions about leaving.

The second option was to directly appear on the day of the celebration. It could be said to be far more challenging as he would face the Masked Moon Sects, the Six Sects of Yue, and even the Nine Nations Alliance. So long as he was able to settle the problems that arose, he could be together with Nangong Wan in a just and honorable fashion without any future worries.

Of course, there was a more simple method. He could have this Wei Lichen mysteriously disappear from this world.

However, this method was also the most dangerous. The Flowing

Mind Sect wasn't any small sect. It was the largest sect in the Nine Nations Union, possessing five Nascent Soul stage elders. It was far stronger than the Drifting Cloud Sect.

If this Wei Lichen stayed inside the sect the entire time, even if he had amazing abilities, Han Li wouldn't even have an opportunity to make an attempt. And even if he managed to kill him, if Han Li's identity was exposed, he would suffer the full brunt of the consequences.

As Han Li pondered, he repeatedly came up with different plans.

In the end, he decided on a compromise of these methods for the sake of reliability. He decided to first hurry on his way to the Masked Moon Sect to see Nangong Wan and ask about her intentions. If she had heavy misgivings or some other difficulties in leaving, he would pay a visit to the Flowing Mind Sect and see whether or not there would be an opportunity to stealthily exterminate Wei Lichen, risking it all for a smooth solution. If there was no opportunity to attack, he would simply appear on the day of the celebration and openly make his own proposal to marry Nangong Wan.

Regardless of what happened or her willingness to agree, he must forcefully take her away. There are few things in his lifetime that had ever made him feel this way. He normally acted with regards to reason, not emotion, but this time, Han Li could not allow Nangong Wan to marry someone else.

With his current abilities, anything short of a late Nascent Soul cultivator wouldn't be able to stop him.

With this all decided, his spirits were roused. After regaining his bearings, he increased the speed of his flight and quickly traveled.

When the Six Sects of Yue were defeated, they could only take refuge with the Nine Nations Alliance. They planted down their sects in the country with the least other sects, the State of Beiliang. The State of Beiliang had sparsely few cultivators due to the lack of

cultivation resources.

As for selecting who would join the six sects, they couldn't possibly be choosy. Additionally, the Six Sect cultivators were secretly and openly feuding with the local sects for over a hundred years before managing to barely establish themselves. Of course, spirit veins and other resources the Six Sects of Yue had access to were far inferior to what they had in their original country.

But after so many years of desperate fighting, the six sects eventually recovered a bit of their strength and their standing in the Nine Nations Alliance grew. With the Masked Moon Sect being the strongest amongst the Six Sects of Yue, they managed to occupy a mountain range with decent spirit veins.

The west side of the State of Beiliang's Gemcut Mountains was the base of the Masked Moon Sect. They had constructed countless buildings of all sorts and laid down various grand restrictions here.

The Gemcut Mountains was divided into three levels. The lowest level being at the base of the mountain and was where the low grade cultivators lived. Naturally, only Core Formation cultivators had the qualifications to live in the middle level.

Although Foundation Establishment cultivators weren't worthy of notice in the eyes of those at Core Formation stage and above, in the eyes of stagnant Qi Condensation cultivators, they viewed them as important pillars of the sect.

The Masked Moon Sect's various stewards were naturally exceedingly capable people, and all possessed Foundation Establishment cultivation, the exception being the mortal affairs steward, Yuan Kun. He was the sole Qi Condensation steward in the sect.

The reason this was possible was because the Yuan Clan, a mid-sized clan native to the State of Beiliang, had welcomed the six sects when they had just entered the country. They had expended much effort on behalf of the Masked Moon Sect in particular. As a

reward for the Yuan Clan's actions, the Masked Moon Sect would only assign Yuan Clan disciples to this minor position for generations to come.

But as luck would have it, Yuan Kun was the nephew of the Yuan Clan Lord and had no future prospects in cultivation. As a result of the personal request of the Yuan Clan Lord, the upper echelon of the Masked Moon Sect appointed him as a sect steward.

While Yuan Kun may not have much prospects in cultivation, he was well adjusted to the mortal world and was able to smoothly handle his tasks without any mishap, consolidating his position as a steward.

But due to the rules of seniority in the cultivation world, the low grade cultivators in the Masked Moon Sect didn't treat him with much more respect as he was still only a Qi Condensation cultivator. He was also held in contempt by the other Foundation Establishment stage stewards. However, Steward Yuan didn't care about this in the least and leisurely spent his days in the Masked Moon Sect, drawing from his connections and lowering his head when needed.

One day, Yuan Kun appeared at a mortal village closest to the Gemcut mountains, bringing along two Masked Moon Sect disciples along with him that possessed lower cultivation. As normal, they went around several stores and purchased a few everyday goods.

But unbeknownst to him, after he walked through three of these stores, an indiscernible trace of spiritual sense stealthily wrapped around the clothes of the steward, attentively watching this trifling Qi Condensation cultivator.

# Chapter 712: Entering Disguised

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Not long after Yuan Kun began shopping in the village, he smoothly gathered all the items he needed and flew back to the Gemcut Mountains with his two assistants. But when the three only traveled fifteen kilometers away from the city, silver light suddenly flashed ahead of them, revealing a gorgeous young woman. She looked at the three with a captivating smile.

“We are Masked Moon Sect disciples. Senior...” Although Yuan Kun’s cultivation was low, the strange scene that appeared before him indicated that the woman was beyond ordinary. He immediately fell back on his identity as a sect member to protect them.

However, it seemed as if the woman didn’t hear him. She chuckled and blew out a pink mist from her mouth. The mist appeared to be slow, but it enveloped the three in an instant.

Yuan Kun and company were unable to resist due to their meager cultivation. After smelling a trace of the scent, they felt their minds fade away as they fell unconscious, promptly collapsing onto the ground.

Without any hesitation, the young woman waved her sleeve and released a white mist from her cuff. The mist immediately grabbed the three and brought them to her side. After glancing at their faces, the young woman giggled and glowed with silver light, immediately taking to the skies with her captives.

The white light traveled over five kilometers away before dropping down at a desolate forest. There was an azure-robed youth that was sitting down cross-legged beneath a large tree and peacefully resting.

Right after the white light suddenly appeared before them, it disappeared. Yuan Kun and company were silently laid down in front of the youth, and the young woman gracefully floated down

from the sky. The woman stood in front of the youth and respectfully said, “Master, I’ve brought people. They called themselves Masked Moon Sect cultivators. They should be what you’re looking for.”

The youth opened his eyes and indifferently asked, “You didn’t alarm any others?”

Of course, the youth was Han Li who had spent most of the last month rushing to the State of Beiliang.

Since he planned on stealthily finding Nangong Wan, he couldn’t brazenly pay her a visit on her doorstep. It would better to avoid any unnecessary trouble. As such, he needed to understand a few details about the Masked Moon Sect and he decided to stay at a small town nearby.

As one who had once tread the path of cultivation since he was a low grade cultivator, Han Li understood that a sect’s low grade disciples were incapable of completely separating themselves from the mortal world. The town closest to the sect should be a place well frequented by low grade disciples.

With Han Li’s immense spiritual sense, regardless of how many cultivators entered the city, they would be incapable of escaping his notice.

Originally, Han Li was eyeing another Masked Moon Sect Qi Condensation disciple, but when a Qi Condensation disciple wearing steward robes arrived in town, Han Li’s target had changed to him. A disciple of higher rank would naturally know of the sect far better.

With a thread of spiritual sense tied around him, he ordered Silvermoon to capture him and his associates. Afterwards, they were brought to the forest where he was waiting.

Knowing that Han Li was currently in a poor mood, she abandoned any intent to jest and tactfully replied in an earnest

manner, “Master, be at ease. It was an easy task to capture three Qi Condensation cultivators. It definitely didn’t catch anyone’s attention.”

Han Li expressionlessly glanced at Yuan Kun’s body and coldly grunted, “Well done. With your demon fox illusion techniques and my Dreamtear Technique, we will have him tell us everything.”

Silvermoon immediately answered, “As you command, Master.”

Afterwards, she turned around and blew several breaths of pink mist onto the three on the ground, filling the entire surrounding area.

Han Li stood up and slowly entered the mist. Not long after, faint azure light faintly pulsed from within it.

Although the Gemcut Mountains had a notable name, the first time anyone that came to its mountain wouldn’t know why it had the name “Gemcut”. It didn’t appear exquisite as its name had implied. Rather, it appeared strange and oversized.

The Gemcut Mountains didn’t have many branching mountain, but the main mountain spanned tens of kilometers in length. Moreover, the bottom half the mountain appeared quite smooth and flat without any cliffs as if it were a huge slope.

But the center of the mountains suddenly grew steep. Not only was the mountain stones frighteningly steep but the spiritual Qi was far more plentiful. It was where the Core Formation cultivators placed their own cave residences.

But in order to prevent any attacks from the sky, ferocious spell restrictions were placed down around the top of the Gemcut Mountains. Low grade disciples have no method of climbing the mountain apart from a few set pathways.

Han Li currently stood at the center of the Gemcut Mountains on a simple stone road. He looked up to the top of the Gemcut Mountains with a soft expression.

His current appearance had greatly changed through the use of the Appearance Exchange Arts. His entire body and stature had precisely changed to that of Yuan Kun. Of course, he had also restrained his cultivation to Qi Condensation stage.

After acquiring the information that he wanted from Yuan Kun and his subordinates, he imprisoned the three in a dry tree hollow and boldly entered the Gemcut Mountains. With Yuan Kun's steward command medallion along with the information he had acquired from the Dreamtear technique, he was able to easily enter the Masked Moon Sect.

He currently stood at a market city that was constructed at a corner of the Gemcut Mountains where thousands of disciples traded for wanted items. Among them were a few stores that sold mortal goods which were specifically managed by this Steward Yuan.

Han Li didn't directly head to the top of the mountain. Instead, he patiently brought the items that Yuan Kun purchased at the mortal town and delivered them to these stores. He left each of these stores under the respective gazes of the shopkeepers and glanced up the mountain.

From these three disciples' memories, although Nangong Wan was on the verge of getting married, she wasn't freely accepting visitors despite not being in secluded cultivation. Even the high grade disciples of the sect found it difficult to meet their Martial Ancestor Nangong.

As for why Nangong Wan would agree to become the pair cultivation companion of the Flowing Mind Sect's Wei Lichen, it was still unknown to Han Li. The three he had captured were lowly ranked and didn't know anything of the matter, much to Han Li's disappointment.

But from their memories, Han Li was able to clearly see, as the youngest Nascent Soul cultivator in the Masked Moon Sect and an

amazing, world-shaking beauty, Nangong Wan held the vast adoration of many of the low grade disciples in the sect. There were even vast amounts of male disciples that secretly held romantic feelings for her, Yuan Kun being one of them.

Although he had only seen Nangong Wan a couple of times in the many years that he spent there, he was infatuated. When he heard that Nangong Wan was to be married, Steward Yuan felt depressed for a long while. When Han Li saw these memories, he was speechless.

Now that Han Li had finished delivering the mortal goods, he casually dealt with other matters in accordance to Yuan Kun's memories. Fortunately, Steward Yuan didn't have any particularly deep relationships in the sect and none were able to see through any gaps in behavior.

A while later, Han Li saw that the sky was dimming and felt that it was about time. According to the Yuan Kun's ordinary behavior, he calmly climbed the mountain.

Although Yuan Kun was only a Qi Condensation cultivator, he was still a sect steward, and possessed a small, unremarkable residence on the second level of the Gemcut Mountains.

Han Li was able to make it into the second level of the Gemcut Mountains without any problems, but he came across a few Foundation Establishment cultivators along the way. When they spotted Han Li disguised as Steward Yuan, they each glanced at him with disdain. There were a few that ignored him.

When Han Li was alone, he bitterly chuckled as he stroked his chin. It seems that apart from Steward Yuan's subordinates, this person didn't get along well with others.

After entering the second level, Han Li didn't go to Yuan Kun's small residence. Instead, he flew towards the top of the mountain along the path on a low altitude flying tool. Although the other areas appeared empty, Han Li knew that formidable restrictions

had been placed there. He naturally didn't dare to touch them.

Eventually, Han Li arrived at the border entrance between the second and third level of the mountain. There were two Foundation Establishment cultivators that had bluntly blocked his way.

The pale-skinned cultivator frowned and loudly shouted, "Yuan Kun! What did you come here for! You should know that you have no business here."

After a long while of hesitation, "Martial Uncles, this Martial Nephew wishes... wishes to see Martial Ancestor Nangong. Would Martial Uncles be able to report this?"

Once the two cultivators recovered from their shock, they harshly rebuked him without further thought, "What are you saying? Yuan Kun, are you awake? You must be daydreaming to think you can see Martial Ancestor Nangong!"

# Chapter 713: Nangong Wan

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Han Li wore a miserable expression and said, “When this Martial Nephew went out to purchase a few items, I encountered a Senior with an unfathomable cultivation, he wanted to me to give something to Martial Ancestor Nangong. He even placed a restriction on my body, saying that only Martial Ancestor Nangong would be able to dispel it.”

The pale-skinned cultivator asked bewilderedly, “Senior!? Was he a Core Formation cultivator?”

Continuing his dejected expression, he helplessly said, “This... Martial Nephew isn’t sure. But this cultivator stated that he was an old friend of Martial Ancestor Nangong and wished to send her a congratulatory gift, having heard that he grand celebration was drawing near. There are still some things that I have to personally say to her.”

“An old friend of Martial Ancestor? Could he also be a Nascent Soul Senior?” This time, the burly cultivator had spoken with alarm.

After the pale-skinned cultivator recovered from his surprise, he doubtfully said, “It is possible, but since Senior was already there, why didn’t he personally arrive at the mountain and present the gift?”

“Who knows! Maybe this Senior has some of other matters to attend to, or maybe he finds it inconvenient,” after a few of his musings, the burly cultivate bluntly said, “Martial Nephew Yuan, extend your hand and let us see the restriction on your body!”

Having expected this, Han Li calmly extended his arm towards him and surged spiritual power throughout his power, simulating a bizarre magic power restriction on his body.

The burly cultivator grabbed onto Han Li’s arm and revealed

astonishment after sensing it for a short moment. The pale-skinned cultivator also curiously placed two of his fingers on Han Li's arm. Not long after, he wore a similar expression on his face.

The pale-skinned cultivator eased his expression and his tone grew less harsh, "That's right, a fearsome restriction has been placed on your body. From the degree of its complexity, it appears to have been laid down by a Nascent Soul cultivator. However, we cannot allow you to easily climb the mountain on this alone. First, take out the congratulatory gift. One of us will take it to Martial Ancestor Nangong and see whether or not this person is truly an old friend of hers."

If Martial Ancestor is willing to see you, you can climb the mountain. Do you understand, Martial Nephew Yuan?"

When Han Li heard this, he wore a bitter expression, but after some thought, he nodded his head.

Han Li took out a long wooden box from his storage pouch and handed it over to him. He anxiously added, "This is fine. However, Martial Uncle must clearly explain the matter of the restriction placed down on my body!"

The lid of the wooden box had a faint silver restriction talisman placed on top of it. From its spiritual Qi fluctuations, it appeared to be quite importantly. It was clear to see this was to prevent anybody from opening the box as it was delivered.

"I understand. Properly wait here for the time being. Junior Martial Brother Ma, I am going!" The pale-skinned cultivator spoke impatiently to Han Li and gave a word of warning to the burly cultivator before flying off on his magic tool with the wooden box in hand.

Han Li could only calmly stand in place.

Although he was confident that Nangong Wan would see him once she opened the box, he still felt somewhat apprehensive.

He answered the intermittent questions from the guard that was left behind. However, when he asked of the appearance of the Senior who had delivered this gift, Han Li answered that this Senior was wearing a cloak and that he couldn't tell whether or not they were a man or a woman.

After the time it took to finish a meal, the pale-skinned cultivator returned with empty hands.

"Martial Ancestor Nanlong said that this person is truly an old friend of hers, and that I am able to bring you to see her to dissolve the restriction." After curtly speaking, the pale-faced cultivator had Han Li follow him up the mountain.

Han Li was overjoyed by this and wore an excited expression as he followed the pale-skinned cultivator.

"Be careful. There are paths that you cannot take no matter what. These restrictions are far more formidable than the restrictions on the center level. Even I wouldn't survive if I fell into them."

Of course, Han Li answered with acknowledgement.

At that moment, a streak of blue light shot forwards to meet them. The pale-skinned cultivator seemed to recognize the owner of this light and stopped in place with a respectful expression.

Soon, the light arrived before the two and faded away to reveal a middle-aged, embroidered-robed cultivator with an imposing appearance.

The embroidered-robed cultivator glanced at Han Li and said with a cold tone, "Martial Nephew Sun, why have you brought a Qi Condensation cultivator to the top of the mountain. Do you not understand the rules here?"

The pale-skinned cultivator seemed to hold much reverence towards the embroidered-robed cultivator and hastily explained, "Martial Senior Lan, this Martial Nephew is only following Martial

Ancestor Nangong's orders. I wouldn't have the courage otherwise to dare to do this."

At that moment, Han Li swept his gaze past the embroidered-robed man to discover that he was merely an early Core Formation cultivator, and that he need not pay him much heed. Although these were his thoughts, he also assumed a respectful expression and didn't dare to rashly speak.

When the embroidered-robed cultivator heard this, he was stunned for a moment before astonishedly asking, "Martial Aunt Nangong wishes to see this person? Tell me how this came to be."

"It's like this. Martial Nephew Yuan..." Unknown whether the pale-skinned cultivator didn't dare to conceal this matter from his Martial Senior or that he was indifferent about the matter, he narrated the events that had occurred.

"An old friend of Martial Aunt Nangong placed a restriction on his body?" The embroidered-robed cultivator frowned and suddenly looked at Han Li with a penetrating gaze.

The embroidered-robed cultivator bluntly ordered, "Let me have a look at the restriction on your body!"

Han Li cursed at this person's nosy meddling and could only helplessly obey.

The embroidered-robed cultivator grabbed Han Li's wrist and deeply examined it for a moment before nodding his head, "Yi! This is truly odd. However, although this restriction is complex, it isn't malicious. It seems this person didn't have any ill intent. Go ahead and see Martial Aunt Nangong!"

Afterwards, he paid the two no further heed and shot down the mountain in a flash of faint blue light. A short moment later, the light dimmed and grew indistinct, disappearing soon after.

The pale-skinned cultivator waited until the embroidered-robed cultivator departed before taking a deep breath and gazing in the

direction that the light disappeared. He muttered, “Martial Uncle Lan’s Incorporeal Evasion Technique can be said to be as blue as his name. Although he is only at early Core Formation stage, even late Core Formation cultivators would find it difficult to deal with him!”

‘The Incorporeal Evasion Technique!’ When Han Li heard this, his heart stirred. Could this person have something to do with the Old Eccentric Qiong that he saw during the Trial by Blood and Fire? Perhaps he was a descendant or disciple.

At that moment, the pale-skinned cultivator had relaxed and continued to lead the way. Soon after, Han Li tossed the matter of the embroidered-robed cultivator to the back of his mind.

Because the top level of the Gemcut Mountains didn’t house many cultivators to begin with, the two didn’t encounter anybody else as they traveled to a cave residence close to the peak of the mountain.

The pale-skinned cultivator spoke with a tone of admiration, “This is Martial Ancestor Nanlong’s meditation area! Speak carefully when you reply to the Martial Ancestor, and don’t say anything unrelated to the restriction placed on your body. Perhaps she may have some benefits in store for you!”

After he said that, he turned towards the gate and respectfully said, “Reporting to Martial Ancestor. The disciple is already here.”

“En! I understand. Have the disciple enter alone. You may take your leave!” The voice faintly carried a trace of familiarity and strangeness. Once those words were said, the door to the cave residence flickered with yellow light and the stone opened.

Han Li walked forward without any hesitation.

To Han Li’s surprise, there was a beautiful female cultivator wearing yellow short-sleeved robes that stood behind the door. She appeared to be the age of eighteen and possessed early Foundation

Establishment cultivation.

The woman examined Han Li's transformed figure of Yuan Kun and found nothing to be wrong. She coldly said, "Follow me. Martial Ancestor is waiting for you in the main hall!"

The woman turned around and entered the cave residence. Han Li lightly sighed and closely followed after her.

Nangong Wan's cave residence couldn't be considered large. The Foundation Establishment woman brought Han Li down a short corridor and through several small side rooms before arriving at the main hall.

The hall was elegantly decorated and there was some unknown essence being burned at an unknown corner of the room. There were two interesting small flower pots, each with a precious herb flourishing in them.

There was an exquisite square wooden table at the center of the hall. Each side had a light green straw chair. One of the chairs was occupied with a black-haired, white-clothed young woman. She was looking down at the huge sparkling silver sword in her hand.

The wood box on the table was open now laid empty.

His Surname "Lan" 蓝 is the same character for blue.

# Chapter 714: Thoughts of the Past

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When the white-clothed woman saw Han Li enter, she stroked the silver sword before returning it to the wooden box. She then raised her head and gently glanced at Han Li. The face that Han Li yearned for in countless dreams had appeared before him.

A slightly pointed chin, a delicate nose, and bright, enchanting eyes. These traces of familiarity caused Han Li to feel a trace of excitement along with a trace of warmth in his heart that had remained dormant since he had last spent time with her. It felt like it had been ages ago.

Any thoughts or words had already been released from his mind at that moment. Only an overwhelming passion remained.

When Nangong Wan saw that Han Li was so imprudently staring at her, she was stunned for a moment. With a pensive expression appearing on her face, she unconsciously frowned.

Nangong Wan raised her head and turned to the yellow-clothed woman that had guided Han Li. She calmly said, “Yu’er, go down first. I will be speaking with him alone.”

After a moment of brief surprise, she immediately lowered her head, “Yes, Martial Ancestor!” She then quietly left the hall and disappeared from sight.

Han Li calmly waited for the yellow-clothed woman to disappear before glancing around with his spiritual sense. Seeing that there was no one else present, he stared at Nangong Wan and formed a hand incantation. With a series of explosive crackles coming from his body, his body suddenly grew a few inches, and a flicker of azure light revealed his true face.

“So it really is you, Han Li!” A complicated expression appeared on Nangong Wan’s face, but there was no trace of surprise, only a faint sigh.

Not knowing how to address her, he stuttered before clumsily saying, “You... you knew I was coming!” After he said this, Han Li felt a tinge of regret and couldn’t help but feel annoyed with himself.

“You? Wan’er will due instead.” Han Li’s clumsy reaction had caused Nangong Wan to unfurrow her brow. She softly smiled, displaying her bright eyes and mesmerizing beauty.

“Wan’er!” Han Li felt overjoyed and couldn’t help but softly shout her name. He had finally released the apprehension that was lingering in his heart.

She truly harbored some feelings for him. She wouldn’t have shown him such an appearance otherwise. For a moment, Han Li stared at her with fascination.

Nangong Wan blushed and turned her head, insipidly saying, “What’s nice about looking at me? Could it be I’m more beautiful than your new concubine?”

When Han Li heard her unhappy words, he couldn’t help but be alarmed, “Concubine? So you knew of that as well.”

Nangong Wan lowered her head and glanced down at the floor. She snorted and annoyedly said, “You’re newly joined elder of the Drifting Cloud Sect and recently condensed a Nascent Soul at around two hundred years of age. How could I not know?”

After a short moment, something soon came to mind. “Was it the cultivator surnamed Tang?”

Nangong Wan wiped away a sliver of her hair and mysteriously smiled at Han Li, “So you aren’t dumb! It truly was that Martial Nephew Tang. He had made use of a special method to send me a sound transmission talisman. When I received it, I couldn’t dare to believe it. After disappearing for so many years, you return as a Nascent Soul cultivator. In the past, I hadn’t particularly paid much attention to this field. As such, I immediately called for

recent information on the Drifting Cloud Sect. Although it was a bit slow, I know of your general circumstances.

With your sudden appearance, you became an elder of the Drifting Cloud Sect. You left the trade fair halfway and departed, but I know little of this. But your concubine still remains at Soaring Skies City until this day!"

Han Li touched his chin and revealed a trace of embarrassment as he tried to explain, "At the time, I told her to follow an elder back to the sect. It seems there is something delaying her. However, this concubine..."

Nangong Wang interrupted, "Enough, there is no need to speak more of it. I'm not going to complain about how you took in a concubine. After all, am I not getting married myself?" Her expression suddenly grew saddened and incredibly weak.

Han Li's expression slightly changed. With a sullen voice, he unhurriedly asked, "What's going on with that? Could it be you truly plan to marry that person?"

Nangong Wan bit her red lips and bright eyes flickered, "Before I answer that question, I have questions of my own. Why have you come? Do you want me to not marry this person, or do you wish to take me away?"

With complete and unwavering determination, Han Li immediately answered, "Of course it is to take you away! I want you to become my wife! No matter who it is that wishes to take away the one I cherish, they will have to go through me first!"

"That is quite the dream, but when I have ever agreed to become your wife?" Nangong Wan blushed and shyly rebuked him in a charming display.

Han Li silently smiled and said nothing else. As he was new to matters such as this, it would be better to not delve too deeply.

Soon, Nangong Wan's shyness had disappeared, and she

expressionlessly said, “You should know that in the year of the Trial by Blood and Fire, my first thought was to slash you into countless pieces after you took my virginity.

Afterwards, I would use the Vermillion Bird Band to turn your body into ashes to fulfill my revenge. After all, I had bitterly guarded the purity of my body for over a hundred years, but you came along and took it. How could I not bear great hatred towards you?”

“From what you’ve said, I should’ve already died!” Han Li rubbed his nose and found himself not knowing whether to laugh or to cry.

Once that was said, Nangong Wan’s face grew scarlet and she unhappily rebuked him, “Of course. Were it not for some unexplained coincidence that caused my heart to soften, I wouldn’t have released you. Do you believe that Core Formation cultivators are so easily dealt with?”

Han Li grinned and said nothing else. Once Nangong Wan explained a trace of the grudge she held against him, she continued, “After we left and returned to the sect, for some unknown reason, I was unable to cast off your image regardless of whether it be during cultivation or secluded meditation.

Moreover, your image only became more distinct over time, and it appeared more frequently in my mind. At that moment, I realized that you became an inner demon of temptation. If I didn’t cast you off, I feared that my cultivation would become forever stagnant.

“There were only two methods to cast off an inner demon of temptation. I had to either marry you and become one with you, fulfilling the temptation, or to have you disappear from this world. If you no longer existed, the inner demon would gradually fade. Because there was far too great a disparity in cultivation, it was impossible to choose the former. After a long while of inner

torment, I eventually clenched my teeth and decisively decided to exterminate you. But before I could do this, the Six Devil Dao Sects had invaded us, and I came across you at the war camp for the Sects of Yue. You were a Foundation Establishment cultivator at the time, and this had caused my determination to waver. If you were able to continue progressing, I felt that becoming husband and wife wouldn't be impossible.

Han LI bitterly smiled and muttered, "So it turned out that you wished to kill me at the time. When I saw you during that time, I was incredibly excited to see you, but your cold and detached attitude had been a rude awakening. It had depressed me for quite a few days afterwards."

Nangong Wan smiled upon hearing this but continued without answering, "From then on, the Sects of Yue had suffered a great defeat due to Spirit Beast Mountain's betrayal. Each of the six sects then began to evacuate their disciples from the State of Yue.

As the youngest Core Formation cultivator, I was originally among those evacuated, but at the time, I had a good friend within Yellow Maple Valley. In our letters, I came across vague plans for Ancestor Ling Hu's evacuation plan. I knew that you were likely to be in the danger zone.

"I felt shocked at this fact and only one thought had filled my mind: to rescue you. When I left, I was too slow. The battle had already concluded. A majority of the disciples had already died with only a few managing to escape.

Not knowing whether or not you survived, I could only helplessly return to my own sect and assist the rearguard disciples in their fight against the Devil Dao. As a result, I was gravely injured against a Core Formation cultivator and was pursued by several juniors. I think you should know of what happened afterwards. There is no such person as Nangong Bing in this world. I had only changed my appearance.

This wasn't because I didn't wish reveal my true identity, but I couldn't tell you that a Core Formation cultivator like myself came to rescue you with the particular intention of marrying you! Moreover, because I absorbed most of your cultivation at the time, it was even more embarrassing to reveal my true face to you.

However, I didn't wish for you follow me back to join the Masked Moon Sect. I just wanted you to follow me so I could reveal my true appearance and assist you in forming a golden core. We would marry afterwards. But who could've thought of how greedy you were, or perhaps due to chauvinistic stubbornness, that you would simply take the spirit stones. You had left me completely helpless."

Once that was said, a faint smirk appeared on her face and she fiercely glared at Han Li, but how was it that Han Li had felt the sliver of happiness from her eyes?

Of course, Han Li couldn't have known that if he agreed to follow her back to the Masked Moon Sect, Nangong Wan would've definitely brought up the prospect of marriage. However, the most likely resolution was that he would've casually agreed to become another woman's Dao Companion, resolving her inner demons in a disappointing fashion. The one who married him would've likely been someone that Nangong Wan had personally sought out.

# Chapter 715: Heart Restraint Technique

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“There isn’t much to be said after we parted. I returned to the Masked Moon Sect. Once my sect gained footing in the State of Beiliang, I snuck into the State of Yue to find you. However, the information I acquired was rather terrible. I only knew that you had been hunted down by the Ghost Spirit Sect. The concrete details of the matter were unknown. Not long after, I was discovered by the Devil Dao and was forced to return to the Nine Nations Alliance.

Afterwards, I never acquired information on you. I believed you dead and my inner demons with regards to you had gradually disappeared. Along the way, I managed to condense a Nascent Soul and smoothly became an elder of the Masked Moon Sect. And here we are now.” Nangong Wan spoke with a calm tone.

Han Li’s expression changed several times as he listened to Nangong Wan’s unhurried explanation. In the past, she had done many things he was completely ignorant of, causing him to look upon her with even greater warmth.

A moment later, Han Li couldn’t help but ask, “What’s this about Wei Lichen?”

Nangong Wan coldly smiled, “Wei Lichen! I unintentionally encountered him as he was travelling several years prior. I am not fond of him. He appears to be elegant and noble, but he is a thieving hypocrite and a philanderer.

I heard that he secretly performs Yin Drawing Techniques on each of his eight female disciples. He most likely harbors ill intentions towards marrying me. That was why I refused his first request to marry me.”

“Refuse? What changed?” Han Li curiously asked.

Nangong Wan didn’t directly answer and suddenly asked, “Do

you know of the three great Nascent Soul cultivators in the Heavenly South?"

Han Li's expression turned grim and faintly felt that something was amiss, "Naturally. There is a late Nascent Soul cultivator in the Righteous Dao, the Devilish Dao, and the Nine Nations Alliance, each only a step away from entering Deity Transformation stage. This is how each of the three superpowers remain on equal footing."

As for our Heavenly Dao Alliance, we have two mid Nascent Soul stage Dao Companions that are proficient in cooperative techniques. Together, they are capable of difficultly restraining a late Nascent soul cultivator. What? Does Wei Lichen have to do with one of them?"

"That's right. Wei Lichen's Great Uncle is Wei Wuya, one of these three great cultivators. As the highest ranking elder of the Nine Nations Alliance, this Wei Wuya cultivates a rarely seen venomous cultivation art. With a sweep of his hand, he is able to take another life without any contact. His immense abilities are beyond imagination." Nangong Wan folded her fingers together and bitterly smiled.

Han Li scowled and a malicious glint appeared from his eyes, "Could it be that this Wei Wuya personally made things difficult for you?"

Nangong Wan wore an indignant expression, "No, but Wei Wuya is definitely personally involved. You may not know this, but our sect's past great elder passed and was replaced with an old Senior Martial Sister. Although her cultivation isn't weak, she is of shrewd mind and is normally at odds with me. Although we get along with our other elder, the relationship between us is awful!"

Han Li's expression grew sullen as Nangong Wan was about to mention the heart of the matter.

After Nangong Wan gritted her teeth, she said, "After refusing

Wei Lichen's marriage request several times, Wei Lichen somewhat personally caused Wei Wuya to pay a visit to this Senior Martial Sister of mine.

Although I didn't know what the two spoke about, half a year later during an incarnation period of my Female Essence Incarnation Technique, she suddenly restrained me to force me into wedding Wei Lichen."

After a moment of shock, he incredulously said, "Is your Senior Martial Sister not sick in the mind? Using such a method to deal with a Nascent Soul cultivator of the same sect?"

Nangong Wan smirked and mockingly said, "Isn't that the truth? I hadn't expected her to be crazed to this degree. However, it seems Wei Wuya's conditions were truly difficult to refuse. I later found out that so long as the Masked Moon Sect agreed to this marriage, not only would the Six Sects expand out of the State of Beiliang, but Wei Lichen would be willing to leave the Flowing Mind Sect after marrying me and join the Masked Moon Sect.

For these two benefits at the price of one, she acted without any hesitation. Regardless of my intentions, she released information that I was to be wed with Wei Lichen and prepared to hold a celebration, wishing to forcefully conclude the matter before it can be changed. If I wished to later back out, I would have no method of doing so."

Han Li delightedly said, "So it turned out you hadn't agreed to this matter. These words of yours deliberately wishing to marry came as a shock to me!"

Nangong Wan looked at Han Li and unhappily said, "I still have something I wish to ask you! Even after condensing a Nascent Soul for so many years, why is it that you haven't sought me out sooner? If you came a year earlier, this troublesome matter could've been avoided.

"It isn't that I didn't wish to see you, but rather..." Han Li

through to give an explanation, but after a moment, he found this truly strange as well.

Although Han Li faintly felt that Nangong Wan should've been someone that he truly cherished, for some unknown reason, he never thought to touch upon this feeling. If it weren't for news of Nangong Wan suddenly marrying, he feared that he still would've hesitated on this matter rather than directly confront these feelings.

As Han Li's expression remained calm, Nangong Wan gracefully stood up and took several steps toward Han Li. She directly looked into his eyes and said, "In truth, my own circumstances are about the same as yours. Although our own experiences and abilities are far beyond that of mortals, we are fearful and unfamiliar towards our first venture of our emotions.

Even if we have a deep impression of each other, we aren't a mortal pair after all. We cannot release all of our passions in an instant and have our emotions blaze like a star.

For an optimal attitude for cultivation, cultivators have no option but to weaken our emotions and bury a majority of them. What is left behind is only an ordinary and flat relationship that is enduring. But when I heard that you were still alive, I felt more than happy and spent two days in careful consideration before eventually deciding to accept you in accordance to my feelings."

After she said this with a soft tone, Nangong Wan extended her slender hand and grabbed Han Li's palm.

After a moment of silence, Han Li placed his other hand on top. The soft sensation of her hand caused him to feel a trace of comfort.

Nangong Wan blushed and she quickly pulled her hand away, bashfully glaring at Han Li in the process. Han Li didn't mind this and simply smiled, "Wan'er, although you are trapped here, from how calm you are, you should already have a plan for escape. Why

else would you appear so worry free?"

When Nangong Wan heard this, she smiled and sly intent was betrayed from her eyes, "You're a quick thinker! Yes, although I am under house arrest, only the sparse few in the upper echelons are aware of this matter. Ordinary disciples are completely ignorant. Else, I wouldn't have been able to directly receive a sound transmission talisman from Martial Nephew Tang. However, many restrictions have been placed on my body in fear that I would flee.

The other restrictions are of no matter to me as they were placed without knowledge of what amazing abilities I was capable of once I entered Nascent Soul stage. These common restrictions can be removed at any time, restoring my original cultivation. But there is one restriction that isn't easily dissolved, the Heart Restraint Technique was personally placed on my body by that Senior Martial Sister.

This technique was something that she prepared from a record. If I was unwilling to agree to the marriage, she'd be able to use this technique to temporarily control me. She even used her own blood essence to place down the restriction, creating a restriction talisman that serves as the crucial point of the restriction. Through the use of this restriction medallion, I will not be able to escape her control within fifty kilometers of her, unless it is destroyed.

Fortunately, there isn't too great a gap between our cultivation and she is only able to control me to perform a few simple movements. She will have no control over my body's magic power."

Han Li curiously asked, "Then your plan was to..."

Nangong Wan softly smiled and chuckled. She said with a worryless tone, "I originally thought to restore my magic power when security was the lightest, several days before the ceremony

was about to take place. Afterwards, I would immediately flee far away. So long as I am outside of the restriction talisman's range, she cannot control me. But since you're here now, I'll leave this matter to you. After all, you are the man that wishes to marry me. From what I've heard, you were able to easily defeat a cultivator of a similar grade. You should be quite skilled."

Han Li frowned and muttered, "Heart Restraint Technique? That restriction is truly troublesome. Are there other methods of dissolving it apart from destroying the medallion?"

Nangong Wan's bright eyes flickered and she carelessly said, "Even if there isn't, leave it be. We'll be far away from the Masked Moon Sect anyhow."

Han Li's eyes narrowed and a cold glint flickered from his eyes. He imposingly said, "It's fine! Isn't it just a restriction talisman? It should be in your Senior Martial Sister's grasp. I can simply go and fetch it. I'll be able to vent some anger on your behalf as well!"

Nangong Wan shook her head and pursed her lips in a smile, revealing a trace of mischievousness, "I was merely saying it to test your intentions. I truly had no intention of having you go and take the restriction talisman. My Senior Martial Sister is a mid Nascent Soul cultivator and possesses abilities beyond that of early Nascent Soul cultivators like us. Let us sneak away stealthily. At worst, I'll just spend another ten years whittling away at the formation."

Han Li grew silent. The time for him to be united with this otherworldly woman was soon to come!

# Chapter 716: Preparing an Ambush

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Han Li smiled and confidently said, “No matter. Let us first see how it goes. If it doesn’t succeed, we can make our escape. With me around, I’ll be able to bring you out regardless of the restrictions on your body.”

After studying at Han Li for a while, she seemed to understand that there was no changing his mind. She bit her lips and said, “This... Fine! Although I don’t know how vast your abilities are, you should be somewhat skilled given your confidence. But there is no need for you to take the initiative to go find her. My senior martial sister’s residence is layered with restrictions, so I’ll draw her here instead. Afterwards, we’ll be able to draw assistance from the restrictions to capture her while her guard is down.”

After a brief moment of thought, Han Li smiled and said, “That is method is truly more reliable. However, can you still use the restrictions on your cave residence? When I arrived, it appeared that the restrictions were shattered.”

Nangong Wan quickly replied, “No worries. Although a few of the surface restrictions have been shattered by my senior martial sister, there is still one very formidable hidden restriction that she has yet to discover. It can still be used.”

Han Li rubbed his chin and said, “Good! Since we can use that, I also have several spell formation tool sets. Although they aren’t powerful, after they are placed, they will be able to provide a certain level of impedance.”

Having heard Han Li, Nangong Wan became more confident. “You have formation flags? All the better. We cannot delay. I will need half a day to remove the restrictions on my body and restore my magic power. You should start placing down the spell formations during that time.”

After a moment of thought, Han Li puzzlingly asked, “If we

manage to restrain your senior martial sister, can't you take control of the Masked Moon Sect? That way, we wouldn't have to flee."

After a moment of surprise, Nangong Wan shook her head, "That won't be possible! Apart from our senior martial sister, there is one other Nascent Soul cultivator. Although my relationship with him is good, he certainly won't allow me to take the title of Grand Elder illegitimately. I also have no desire for a power struggle. I only want a peaceful place where I can quietly cultivate."

Han Li shook his head and coldly smiled, "If that's the case, then leave it be! If this succeeds smoothly, you can follow me back to the Drifting Cloud Sect. Even if the Nine Nations Union were stronger and Wei Wuya heavily doted on Wei Lichen, he wouldn't dare to rashly offend the Heavenly Dao Alliance along with two Nascent Soul cultivators during an invasion of spell warriors."

Soon after, he slapped the storage pouch at his waist and flipped his hand, summoning a pile of formation flags and formation plates.

When Nangong Wan saw this, she faintly smiled and sat back down. With her eyes closed, she formed an odd incantation seal with her hands. A short moment later, her snow-white clothes began to emit a scarlet-red flame. It reached a meter tall and enveloped Nangong Wan.

Han Li then set into motion. His body blurred and circled around the hall, placing down formation flags and plates all over the hall. Radiance of various colors briefly shone before sinking deep into the hall and disappearing from sight.

Arranging the formations took little time, but in order for the spell formations to display as much power as possible, Han Li had the spell formations cover only the area of the hall. Additionally, he also placed the spell formations so that they would remain hidden unless they were meticulously searched for.

These formation flags and plates were all something Han Li had refined during his time as a Core Formation-stage cultivator. They lacked even the power to deal with Core Formation cultivators, let alone Nascent Soul cultivators. Han Li didn't have much hope for them. After placing down all the spell formations, he muttered to himself and suddenly swepted his sleeve. A streak of white light shot out from his buff and flew a circle around Han Li before dropping down in front Han Li, revealing itself to be small white fox.

Silvermoon beamed and said, "Master, are you not scared that you'll make Mistress Nangong jealous by summoning me?"

Han Li raised his brows and glared at the small fox, "Humph! Who'd get jealous over an artifact spirit like you? I will be facing a mid Nascent Soul stage cultivator soon, and I cannot allow her to flee. Although I have some restrictions assisting me, I will also need you to help. A mid Nascent Soul cultivator is incomparable to an early Nascent Soul cultivator. It will be difficult to overcome her even while using all my power."

Silvermoon swiftly replied, "Master, how do you plan on having this servant assist you?"

Han Li took something out from his storage pouch and handed it over to Silvermoon, "It's simple. Use this treasure during a suitable moment. You cannot allow her to escape."

Silvermoon clasped the item with her claw and incredulously said, "You're letting me use this?"

Han Li calmly said, "Right! If you're controlling this item, you should be able to display even more of its might than I can. And I would consume magic power by using this item, so it'd be better to let you use it. Of course, you will only be able to use this for a short time. After all, artifact spirits aren't able to control other treasures for a long period of time."

Silvermoon lowered her head and dejectedly said, "Silvermoon

understands.” At the same time, she rubbed the object several times as if she were fond of it. When Han Li saw this, he felt his heart stir.

After Silvermoon grasped this item, her entire body flickered with silver light and she disappeared into the ground.

Afterwards, Han Li walked several circles around the hall, and suddenly raised his head to look at the ceiling with sudden inspiration. After muttering to himself for a moment, he tossed his spirit beast pouch into the air and summoned a large swarm of black-tainted Gold Devouring Beetles. They revolved above him as a three-meter-wide cloud.

Han Li took a deep breath and blew an azure mist onto the cloud. With his two hands in an incantation seal, he softly uttered an incantation, and the insect cloud buzzed for a moment before transforming into specks of starlight. The specks of light then floated up to the ceiling and disappeared with flickers of azure light, completely masking their aura.

Han Li narrowed his eyes and stared at the ceiling for a moment more. Having sensed nothing obvious, he nodded his head in satisfaction.

Having laid this all down, Han Li turned his gaze to Nangong Wan. At that moment, the flames on her body wandered and shifted until they took the shape of a round red disk that strangely pulsed with light.

The changes in the flame also influenced the spiritual Qi in the hall, causing it to grow restless.

Han Li frowned at the sight. After some thought, he struck a nearby stone pillar with a spell seal and caused a layer of azure barrier to suddenly appear with Nangong Wan at its center. Soon, the spiritual Qi around the hall returned to normal.

When Han Li saw this, he smiled and extended his arm,

summoning a straw chair into his grasp. He then casually took a seat across from Nangong Wan and silently stared at her.

With such a good opportunity to glance at her captivating face, he naturally wanted to take a good look at the woman he yearned for many years.

Not long after, Han Li became entranced and his expression grew lax. But soon, Han Li's figure abruptly disappeared without warning.

The woman who had been spying from outside the hall was alarmed by this. Cursing inwardly, she immediately attempted to flee. But she was too slow as she heard Han Li's calm voice from behind her, "Why are you spying on us? Are you not scared your martial ancestor will rebuke you?"

Not daring to turn her head, she stuttered, "I—I wasn't spying. It was just that Martial Ancestor hasn't emerged after such a long time, so I grew worried." This was the yellow-robed woman who had led Han Li into the hall.

At that moment, she already sensed a huge pressure appear behind her, compelling her to give her apprehensive explanation.

With his hands behind his back, he stared at the young woman emotionlessly said, "Oh, really? Since you only wished to take a look, why is it that you've hid yourself so thoroughly? You even used a such a rare high-grade talisman as a Concealing Spirit Talisman. How did a meager Foundation Establishment cultivator like you get your hands on that?"

"I..."

In the young woman's alarm, Han Li coldly said, "There is no need for any further explanation. You will obediently follow me back. Once your martial ancestor finishes, she will decide how to deal with you."

Once the yellow-robed woman heard this, she grew fearful and

instantly squeezed the talisman in her other hand. Her body flashed with yellow light and she shot down the corridor in an attempt to escape.

Han Li coldly stared at her but made no move to pursue her. Once she traveled about thirty meters, a nearby wall suddenly spat a cloud of pink mist which enveloped her.

The light surrounding the young woman's body scattered, and her body swayed several times before falling to the ground.

In a flicker of yellow light, Silvermoon emerged from the wall and gracefully shook her tail several times before walking up to the young woman with a smile.

# Chapter 717: Ambush

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Setting Sun Hall was the residence for the great elder for many successive generations of the Masked Moon Sect. Not only was a spirit well placed there, but the hall was also heavily layered with restrictions. Apart from a few other elders, none are able to easily approach the hall without the permission of the great elder.

At that moment, a streak of red light flew across the horizon. It revolved several times around Setting Sun Hall and was able to enter without obstruction.

The red light passed through several layers of restrictions as if they weren't there, and entered a side room after taking a few turns. Inside the room was a woman of graceful beauty meditating on a prayer mat. Her skin seemed icily pale, and her age appeared to be in her early twenties. Her body faintly emitted an icy Qi.

In the instant the red light appeared before the woman, she slowly opened her eyes and frowned. She beckoned to the red light and it then dropped down into the woman's hand in a fist-sized ball of red light. The icy woman stared at the flame and expressionlessly flipped her hand, extinguishing it.

"What is that girl planning? Taking the initiative to see me? But since her tone is so gentle, I better have a look!" In a swift and decisive manner, the woman quickly flew off in a streak of white light and instantly flew out of Setting Sun Hall.

Not long after, the woman arrived in front of Nangong Wan's cave residence. She descended onto the ground and examined her surroundings. It appeared ordinary and the restrictions outside the cave residence were still damaged beyond use. Having noticed nothing strange, she walked towards the cave residence with confidence and struck the stone door with a white spell seal, opening it of its own accord.

The pale woman then calmly walked in without a word.

“I pay my respects to Martial Ancestor!” A young, yellow-clothed woman that was standing behind the stone door, immediately saluted the icy woman as soon as she appeared.

The icy woman took an casual glance at her and indifferently said, “It seems your cultivation has progressed since the last time I saw you. It seems you should’ve already taken those medicine pills I’ve given you.” She then began to slowly walk deeper into the cave residence.

The yellow-clothed woman lowered her head and quickly replied, “Many thanks for the medicine, Martial Ancestor! This disciple wouldn’t have progressed so quickly without it!”

“It is good that you know! Has Junior Martial Sister Nangong taken any strange actions in her cave residence?” Tell me, has Junior Martial Sister Nangong been taking any strange actions lately?”

The young woman obediently said, “Nothing much. Apart from seeing a sect disciple today, she hasn’t done anything else.”

“No. She hasn’t done anything today apart from meeting with a disciple.” The young woman spoke meticulously.

“Your Martial Uncle Lan already told me about this from a sound transmission talisman. What gift did that disciple bring? Has he already left?”

“That disciple was merely a low grade steward in the sect. He had already left a few hours ago. After Martial Ancestor Nangong received the gift, she actually seemed somewhat unhappy.”

The icy woman’s expression stirred upon hearing this, “Oh? What kind of gift was it that made her unhappy?”

The yellow-clothed woman further lowered her head and uttered each word with deliberation, “It was simply a silver sword magic tool. Martial Ancestor Nangong felt ill at ease upon seeing it.”

After pondering for a moment, the icy woman’s face revealed a

trace of astonishment and said, “It most likely came from a vagrant cultivator that Junior Martial Sister Nangong had befriended while she was travelling. This isn’t anything too strange.”

“Martial Ancestor’s words are certainly true! When Martial Ancestor Nangong received the silver sword, she became pensive for a long while. Afterwards, she decided to send a voice transmission talisman to Martial Ancestor.”

The icy woman curiously mused, “It is truly surprising that this was able to change her mind!” She then casually ordered, “In the future, continue to pay attention to Junior Martial Sister Nangong’s actions. With her restricted cultivation, the high grade talisman I have should allow you to spy on her undetected. So long as you perform well in this task, I will compensate you with vast rewards.”

By the time that was said, the two had already arrived outside the main hall.

“As you command, Martial Ancestor! Martial Ancestor Nangong should be waiting for you in the hall ahead!” The yellow-clothed woman spoke softly and led the way to the hall’s entrance.

The icy woman originally thought to be cautious out of habit and examining her surroundings before entering the hall. However, when she arrived in front of the hall, she heard Nangong Wan’s voice from within, “Senior Martial Sister! Come in. I’ve thought about the matter, and I am able to reluctantly agree, on one condition. You need to make a promise.” Her voice sounded exceptionally calm.

The icy woman was pleasantly surprised, and walked in without further thought. She spoke in a pleasant tone, “Junior Martial Sister Nangong! It is great that you’ve finally came to a realization! So long as you agree to marry the Flowing Mind Sect’s Elder Wei, I will agree to any condition that you raise. With the assistance from

Wei Wuya, our Masked Moon Sect will soon flourish.”

After she spoke, the entire hall entered her view. Nangong Wan was sitting in a straw chair and was holding a crudely refined silver sword in her hand. It was held across her body and she was carefully examining it. It was as if she hadn't spoken just a moment ago.

When the icy woman saw this, she stepped forward and walking into the large hall. A trace of bewilderment appeared on her face and she thought to ask Nangong Wan something more, but suddenly, her expression abruptly changed and her arm shot backwards at the speed of lightning.

She shot five inch-long sword lights from her fingers towards where the yellow-clothed woman was standing.

When the yellow-clothed woman faced this attack, a strange smile suddenly appeared on her face. The woman's body suddenly sunk into the stone in a flash of yellow light, leaving only tatters of her yellow clothes behind.

She immediately shot towards the hall with her body clad in light upon seeing this fantastical earth evasion technique.

But once she made her way to the exit, she heard a whistle approaching her. A ten-meter-long azure sword was fiercely shooting towards her in an attempt to cleave her in half.

Her expression had vastly changed. With a sudden flick of her fingers, ten foot-long streaks of icy light shot out and struck the huge sword.

The streaks of white light met the sword in a series of loud bangs. The impact of the strikes caused both the huge sword and the woman to recoil.

The icy woman retreated about ten meters before coming to a stop.

The huge azure sword dimmed and diverged into several tens of

flying swords that began to circle in place. Gradually, a silhouette appeared from within the revolving swords, revealing a youth with a common appearance. He gazed at the woman with a faint smile.

When the woman clearly saw Han Li's true cultivation, her pupils shrank. She coldly said, "What is going on? Junior Martial Sister Nangong, who is he and what was that doppelganger of Yu'er?"

The woman immediately reached at her waist and took out a red command medallion.

Han Li shifted his gaze towards the command medallion, and sullenly said, "The restriction medallion!"

With a cold snort, she hostily said, "As expected, Junior Martial Nangong has told you everything. I don't know who you are, but these matters are the affairs of the Masked Moon Sect. You had best stand down, or our Six Sects will hunt you down!"

Having already placed away the silver sword from before, she gracefully stood up and coldly said, "There is no need for Senior Martial Sister to speak such frightening words. I am not without friends in the Six Sects. If they knew what Senior Martial Sister did to a fellow sect member, would she receive the blade? And while you are able to activate the Heart Restriction Technique with that command medallion, do you believe that I will give you the opportunity to use it?"

Soon after, Nangong Wan spat out a ring of flame, her magic treasure the Vermillion Bird Band.

A sinister glint flickered from the icy woman's eyes when she heard this. She had no intention of retreating against Han Li and wore a resentful expression on her face. She suddenly shook her sleeves, and tossed out a streak of white and black light, two flying swords. They revolved once around her and they suddenly grew in size, extending to three meters in length.

The white flying sword was as pure as snow and emitted a bone-chilling icy Qi. As for the black flying sword, it possessed a fantastical heat and occasionally flickered with black flame. There were a rare pair of Yin Yang Swords.

The woman coldly laughed and lightly shook the red command medallion in her head and muttered a few words into it. Red light immediately flickered from it, slowly covering it in a layer of light.

Closely observing her actions, Han Li instantly attempted to interrupt her without another thought. The small silver bell had already revolve around his head. Under the command of Han Li's incantation gesture, the bell began to ring, striking at her with silver soundwaves.

At nearly the same time, Han Li rolled his hands together, sending a streak of red and a streak of azure light towards two some nearby pillars in the hall. As the hall's restrictions were activated, the ground trembled.

# Chapter 718: The Light Stasis Mirror

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Threads of red and azure lights began to emerge from all over the hall and followed after the silver soundwaves, engulfing the icy woman at their center.

In the face of these oncoming attacks, the woman simply pointed to her two swords. Black and white light flashed from the swords as they easily spun once in the air, instantly releasing a wave of glacial and scorching Qi. With the white icy Qi on the outside, and the black scorching Qi on the inside, they conformed into a strange barrier of light around the woman.

When the sound waves struck the barrier, they were entirely absorbed without a trace. But soon after, the red and azure lights from the hall's restrictions had managed to envelop it.

Nangong Wan took action at that moment. In a burst of flame, the Vermillion Bird Band turned into a huge fireball and suddenly exuded a vast pressure. Then with a casual wave of hand, a dim scarlet light flashed from her hand and she vanished from sight. Were it not for Han Li's vast spiritual sense, he wouldn't have been seen through Nangong Wan's sneak attack.

Following a muffle hum, the dim light suddenly revealed it in a colorful burst.

With furious alarm bared on her face, she said, "To think that you would use a Devilstaving Thorn to injure me. Well done. I had always thought that Junior Martial Sister had used all of them. I hadn't expected that you managed to preserve one."

The woman appeared to have somehow suffered a heavy blow but her vitality still held strong. Han Li knew that she merely suffered a minor injury and that Nangong Wan simply intended to interrupt the icy woman's use of the restriction medallion.

After Han Li activated the restrictions in the hall, he flipped his

hand and the pitch-black Thousand Layer Mountain in his hand. He tossed it into the air and quickly struck the mountain with quickly formed spell seals.

Appearing momentarily trapped by the restrictions, the Vermillion Bird Band shot towards the icy woman as a ball of flames. But in that instant, eight ferocious arm-thick flame pythons became tangled with it. A roaring sea of flames soon appeared in the hall.

At that point, the mountain had expanded to twenty meters in height. Just as Han Li was about to command the treasure, he saw a bowl-thick beam of rainbow light shoot out from the sea of flames. Be it flame or light, anything that was struck by the beam of light were unable to resist it.

Clanks suddenly rank out, and the beam of light had abruptly stopped on the spiralling Vermilion Band Ring and completely locked it down.

‘The Light Stasis Mirror!’ Han Li narrowed his eyes with a solemn expression.

Before the woman arrived, Nangong Wan gave Han Li a general explanation of her Senior Martial Sister’s techniques and treasures to Han Li, allowing him more opportunities for Han Li to strike her. The Light Stasis Mirror was the ancient treasure that Nangong Wan has mentioned the most amongst her Senior Martial Sister’s treasures, and was also among the most fantastical of them.

The Azure Stasis Mirror that Han Li saw during the Trial by Blood and Fire was most likely a replica of this ancient treasure. Although it only possessed a hundredth of its power, the magic tool was still renown amongst low grade cultivators as a magic tool that was amongst the best.

The azure restrictions and the flames had been thrown into chaos by the light beam’s overwhelming power, rendering them

completely ineffective. As a result, the icy woman re-appeared once more. Within her black-white barriers, she held a mirror in one hand and formed an incantation gesture with the other.

Han Li's gaze flickered and fell onto famous mirror that was in her hand.

The mirror wasn't large and appeared the same as the Azure Statis Mirror. However, a pitch-black light shined from its body that left a deeply eerie impression on those who saw it. As for the rainbow beam of light that it emitted, it created such a harsh contrasted it made from a bizarre sight.

The hand that formed an incantation gesture was bloodstained, and the restriction medallion that it originally held had disappeared without a trace. It was truly unfathomable how she was injured through the barrier. This Devilstslaying Thorn was quite effective!

With Nangong Wan's bonded magic treasure was restrained by the mirror, Han Li wasn't about idly stand by. He silently pointed to the black mountain, and had it disappear with a faint tremble. A short moment later, it re-appeared above the icy woman and began to fall with tremendous momentum.

The woman scoffed and slightly adjusted the direction of her Light Stasis Mirror while striking it with a spell seal from her free hand. Suddenly, the existing beam of light faintly trembled and a slimmer branching beam shot out form the mirror towards the black mountain. Surpassing the speed of sound, the beam pierced through the air in an attempt to restrain the falling the black mountain.

Already prepared that he wouldn't be able to easily succeed, he clutched his hands together in a incantation gesture without further thought. The falling black mountain suddenly stopped in the air and revolved once before expelling a large cloud of black light from underneath it, just in time to interrupt the beam of light

before it struck.

The black cloud of light engulfed the beam of rainbow light as soon as it had appeared, flowed down to strike the icy woman's barrier. The black layer of the barrier trembled and began to throw her body's spiritual Qi into disarray, nearly causing the beams of light from the mirror to scatter.

The woman's silhouette grew dim from behind the barrier of light and her expression faintly changed. She opened her mouth and spat out a mist of azure Qi onto the mirror without further thought. With the reinforced power, the rainbow light dissipated into a mist and stopped the black mountain and its aura from descending further.

The confrontation between the two forces eventually resulted in a series of muffled explosions.

Nangong Wan's spirits were roused by the sight of the deadlock, and she suddenly willed the restricted Vermillion Bird Ring to vastly fluctuate in size. It screamed with phoenix cries as it attempted its utmost to break free.

For a time, the two joined hands to withstand Nangong Wan's Senior Martial Sister.

Of course, the three weren't simply maintaining this deadlock; they were also observing each other's actions.

Han Li was the first to move, slapping at his waist and summoning a spirit beast pouch. With a loud buzz, countless sparkling golden beetles surged through the air and formed a malevolent golden cloud.

Nangong Wan followed by uttering an incantation in the cadence of an otherworldly song. A huge scarlet barrier suddenly appeared a meter above her head. The barrier glowed with fluid light that gradually grew intensively bright.

The icy woman suddenly tossed the mirror in her hand above her

and slapped her hands together, summoning a small triangular flag into her grasp. Despite her preparations, she still gloomily said, “Divine Incarnation Light! Junior Martial Nangong, you truly aren’t holding back! You dare to use this!”

Although she found the golden insect swarm to be somewhat strange, she paid them little heed. She was clearly unfamiliar with the Gold Devouring Beetles.

Wearing a faint smile on her face, Nangong Wan said, “If Senior Martial Sister doesn’t wish to fight with her life on the line, then hand over the Contraining Heart Restriction Medallion and leave us be.”

The icy woman snorted and malicious intent appeared on her face. She then opened her mouth and spat out a small blood-red sword.

The sword was only several inches long but its body glistened with blinding red light and a thread of black Qi faintly wandered around the sword’s body. As soon as the sword appeared, the sword began to tremble of its own volition, filling the air in the hall with the scent of blood.

The smile disappeared from Nangong Wan’s face with the appearance of the small crimson sword and she icily stared at her senior martial sister, “Blood Devil Sword! Since when did you acquire that evil treasure? Are you not scared of the devilish Qi backlash?”

“Backlash? Have no worry. With this artifact, I will defeat you so quickly there won’t be any opportunity for any devilish Qi backlash. But now, I will ask you one last time. Are you truly unwilling to marry Wei Lichen for the prosperity of the sect?

If you are still unwilling, I will have the Blood Devil Sword go mad. I am not entirely confident of my ability to restrain its power. Do not blame me for not warning you.” The icy woman’s voice was brimming with certainty.

Han Li glanced at the Blood Devil Saber without much care and calmly said, “There is no need for you to ask any questions. Even if Wan’er was willing to sacrifice herself for the Masked Moon Sect, I would not allow it. You will cease this foolishness!”

“And who are you? It seems your cultivation and abilities aren’t weak, but I don’t recall a Nascent Soul that compares with your description. Could it be you are a newly ascended Nascent Soul cultivator? But to call her in such a sappy manner as Wan’er? You must’ve be the reason she had been unwilling to marry Wei Lichen all along.” With a cold glint shining for her eyes, Nangong Wan’s Senior Martial Sister stared at Han Li with murderous intent.

# Chapter 719: Blood Devil Sword

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Han Li responded to Nangong Wan's Senior Martial Sister with an unhurried tone, "It doesn't matter who I am, but it does matter why you are being so obstinate. Just give the Contraining Heart Restriction Medallion to us and we'll immediately release you. As for the Blood Devil Sword, I have nothing to fear from it despite not knowing of it. It would be best if you didn't rely on it."

The icy woman sinisterly stared at Han Li and curled her lips, "You are overestimating yourself! If you knew about Blood Devil Sword, you wouldn't dare to speak so boldly. I'll kill you first and see if Junior Martial Sister Nangong changes her mind."

Immediately after, she bit the tip of her tongue and puffed a large mist of blood essence onto the small crimson sword and clutched her hands in an incantation seal. In a bright flash of crimson light, the small sword grew to a meter in length, flourishing its wicked, bloody appearance. The scent of blood it emitted became all the more repugnant and pervasive as well.

The icy woman then grabbed onto the sword's handle without much care, and she began to glare with brilliantly light as she began to pour the entirety of her spiritual power into the crimson sword.

"Quickly act! We cannot allow her to attack first!" Unable to retain her calm, Nangong Wan shouted fearfully to Han Li. She knew much about the fearsomeness of the Blood Devil Sword and couldn't hold much confidence in Han Li's words.

Before she could finish condensing her Divine Incarnation Light, she pointed to the huge barrier of light above her head. The dome of light trembled and began to quickly revolve. A short moment later, a gorgeous emerald-green light flew out towards the icy woman in an instant.

When the icy woman saw this, she casually waved her hand and

tossed out the triangular flag. When the flag left her hand, it turned into a large cloud of eerie green fog as it intercepted the attack.

As soon as the ray of emerald light struck the green fog, a flood dragon suddenly appeared from the emerald light. The flood dragon suddenly gained the upper hand in the struggle and surged through the fog in an attempt to disperse it. But like a tenacious disease, a layer of the fog stuck onto the flood dragon and prevented it from breaking free.

Nangong Wan grimaced at the sight, and the icy woman revealed a trace of joy.

The icy woman then swept the air with the crimson sword and slashed the sword over Han Li's head. A spacial fluctuation soon followed, carrying a three-meter-wide wave of sword Qi towards him.

The sword Qi was scarlet red and flaunted an ominous, evil aura as it cut forward without restraint.

After the icy woman consumed a majority of her power in her attack, her complexion increasingly reddened several times in the following instant. Then in a flash of light, the crimson sword returned to its original small size.

As the sword Qi traveled through the air, the nearby spiritual Qi flowed forward with the force of a thousand streams, dragging the blood sword Qi forward and concealing it. Han Li could only feel his body tense and suddenly felt his body shackled. Let alone cast any techniques, he couldn't even bring himself to move a single finger. He could only stare at the sword Qi as it slowly made his way towards him.

Nangong Wan's complexion turned deathly pale at the sight of this, and her Senior Martial Sister simply smirked.

Both of them believing that Han Li was about to meet great

catastrophe, Han Li simply took a deep breath as he stared at the blood sword Qi. With ringing thunder and wildly flickering golden light, a net of faint gold lightning appeared around Han Li.

The icy woman was stunned at the sight. Before she could even react, the blood sword Qi struck the net of lightning.

A huge explosion sounded out as the divine lightning and the blood Qi collided.

Despite overbearing sword Qi savage attempts to break through the golden net, it was incapable of severing the thin strands of lightning. Instead, the golden net gradually wrapped around it as if it were a fish.

Then, the net of Divine Devilbane Lightning around Han Li disappeared as it quickly moved to wrap around the sword Qi.

Han Li glanced at the lightning-restrained sword Qi in the air with a trace of astonishment. The Divine Devilbane Lightning appeared to be quickly consumed in its struggle to contain the sword Qi despite its evil warding properties. Had he not released a third of his lightning reserves, it was quite possible he wouldn't have been able to restrain this wicked sword Qi.

Actually, this was the first time he had even encountered an evil Devil Dao treasure that he hadn't been able to easily subdue with the Devilbane Lightning. But if this continued, both the blood sword Qi and the Devilbane Lightning would likely both scatter. This wasn't something that he was going to allow.

With that thought, Han Li raised his hands with a sullen expression, violently releasing two extremely dense bolts of lightning onto the net of lightning that was already restraining the crimson sword Qi.

With the reinforced vigor, the golden lightning was able to defeated the sword Qi, leaving only a small cloud of crimson mist in the air.

Without any further thought, Han Li pointed to the golden lightning in the air, and had it completely encase and condense the golden mist into a golden fist-sized ball. After it fell into his grasp, he expressionlessly glanced at the woman across from him.

The scene had left the icy woman completely dumbstruck with completely disbelief on her face. Nangong Wan was also shocked to the point where her mouth was slightly hanging open.

Seeing the full force of the Blood Devil Sword rendered ineffective was beyond belief for the two women.

Ever since this sword made its appearance in the Heavenly South, it was unknown whether or not it was an ancient or a magic treasure. This sword was similar to an ordinary magic treasure by which it can be kept within one's body, but it was incapable of refined by an owner like an ancient treasure. Despite this, it was still capable of displaying astonishing strength.

Unless one avoided the sword's spacial slash ahead of time, there was no method of blocking it. Any techniques or magic treasures used to block the attack would most likely be cleaved into two. As for the sword's user, unless they used a large amount of blood essence and vitality to activate it, they would have to be wary of devilish Qi backlash.

This was because the body's true essence became increasingly tainted by devilish essence the longer the sword was used. If too much devilish essence was accumulated, one would experience devilish Qi backlash; they would lose any rationality and transform into a raging devil until their death.

There are only a few of these “devilish artifacts” in the entirety of the Heavenly South. It could be said to be a name that was both feared and admired!

Just after Han Li dispersed of the blood sword Qi, he took action without waiting for the two women to recover from their shock. With a fierce whistle, he had the Gold Devouring Beetles swarming

above him roar and flood the room as they charged towards the icy woman.

Han Li's had awakened the icy woman from her stupor. In furious alarm, she opened her mouth and spat out a small silver sword from her mouth and quickly formed an incantation gesture with her hands. The silver sword brilliantly shined and created a barrier of blinding silver light.

With a sudden pop, the silver sword trembled and shot out over a thousand strands of silver light towards in the incoming swarm of golden beetles from within the barrier.

“Sword condensed threads!” Han Li muttered to himself with a frown. So it turned out that Nangong Wan’s Senior Martial Sister was originally a sword cultivator. It was no wonder why she had so many sword type magic treasures.

In the following moment, the silver threads struck the golden insect cloud. With a loud burst of crackles, countless golden shells fell from the sky, thinning out much of the swarm. Holes were left in the cloud of beetles from where the silver sword threads had struck.

Han Li’s heart sank at the sight. Were his current Gold Devouring Beetles still incapable of contending against Nascent Soul cultivators? He had spent such meticulous time and effort to develop them.

The icy woman felt relief at the result of the strike. With several more waves of attacks, the entire swarm of these odd insects should be fully exterminated. It appeared there was nothing to fear from them.

However, Han Li’s disappointment was soon replaced with joy. The beetles that had fallen from the strike had begun to move once more. With a shriek, they began to fly once more and followed the rest of the beetles towards the icy woman.

At that moment, a phoenix cry suddenly sounded out from the green fog and a radiance of a thousand suns suddenly shined and cleanly scattered it away to reveal a vermillion moon from within it. The moon shimmered with light before rushing towards the icy woman's barrier.

The icy woman's expression vastly changed. Suddenly, the light barrier began to spin around her and her body transformed into a streak of black-white light as she attempted to escape from the hall.

After this exchange, the woman finally realized that it would be extremely difficult to take on Han Li and Nangong Wan together. As such, she decided to flee the cave residence and restrain the two once she gathered reinforcements.

While Han Li and Nangong Wan were particularly formidable, they couldn't stand up to the countless disciples of the Masked Moon Sect. And once she arrived outside, she'd be able to activate the Masked Moon Sect's sect guarding formations and trap the two inside.

# Chapter 720: Another Ring

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Nangong Wan's scarlet moon was lagging behind in its attempt to chase her Senior Martial Sister, granting her senior martial sister the opportunity to fly towards the ceiling and strike it.

With a muffled thump, a red light pulsed from the ceiling, but it was unbroken; only a few loose pieces of rock had fallen down.

The icy woman was stunned. Before she realized what had happened, the roof flashed with light and swarms of black, gold, and silver beetles emerge from it. Buzzing, they quickly gathered at the room's center and formed a tri-colored shield.

In the icy woman's alarm, she waved her hand without any further thought, summoning a silver talisman in between her fingers.

When Nangong Wan saw this, she naturally knew what her senior martial sister planned to do. Her expression immediately sank and slapped her storage pouch rather than using the Divine Incarnation Light. A small red flag appeared in her hand and she immediately flung it into the ground.

The icy woman waved her hand and activated the talisman in her hand. The talisman flew from her hand enveloped in a ball of yellow light and streaked towards the ceiling like a shooting star. The yellow light broke through the huge shield as if nothing had been there and directly flew towards the hall's ceiling.

But at that same moment, Nangong Wan had finished uttering an incantation and activated the hidden restrictions in her cave residence. The entire hall began to glow with a red light, surrounding all the surfaces in a barrier of blinding light, the ceiling included.

As if a nemesis of the icy woman's shooting star, the shooting star immediately stopped moving once it struck the light barrier as

if sealed onto it. A large expanse of red light then gathered and wrapped around it.

Nangong Wan's Senior Martial Sister was astonished by this sudden change, but as a greatly experienced cultivator, she immediately realized what restriction this was. She immediately flicked her finger with a sullen expression, launching a bone-chillingly cold white swordstreak from her hand. It circled once around the enveloped talisman and quickly scattered the red light that imprisoned it.

The icy woman was delighted by the result. In a flash of yellow light, she immediately flew towards the ceiling through the opening of the scattered red light.

But as soon as she arrived halfway through the opening, purple light suddenly flashed before her. Something suddenly enveloped her and forcefully dragged her away from hall's ceiling.

With a light chuckle, a white silhouette appeared in a blur, revealing a white-clothed young woman. Silvermoon had suddenly appeared from the ceiling and was grasping a translucent purple thread in her hand. The other end of the purple thread led directly towards the icy woman's body.

At that moment, Nanlong Wan's Senior Martial Sister discovered that her body was enveloped in a net of sparkling purple thread. The thread was nearly invisible to the eye.

In the icy woman's furious alarm, she flicked her fingers without any further thought, shooting over ten streaks of black-white sword Qi. Soon after, she followed up by spitting out a dense green flame from her mouth onto the purple net.

Purple light flourished from the net. But regardless of whether it be the green flame or the black-white sword Qi, they were incapable of harming the purple thread in the slightest.

The icy woman became truly flustered by the sight. Just as she

resolved herself to consume a great amount of vitality to employ a secret technique, Silvermoon smiled and pulled on the purple thread, uttering the word, “Restrain.”

The originally loose net immediately tightened and completely fettered the icy woman, completely preventing her from making even the slightest movement.

The woman’s face grew blood-red. Ever since she condensed a Nascent Soul, she had always been looked up to with respect. She had never been caught in a situation such as this one, especially ever since she entered mid Nascent Soul stage. With shameful fury, a cold glint appeared in her eyes as her entire body magnificently shined with light. In a moment, the light violently surged to double its size and began to faintly contain a faint tinge of crimson.

When Silvermoon saw this, her smile disappeared and she knew things wouldn’t end well. But just as she commanded the Purple Cloudlace to release all of its Jadesun True Fire, Nangong Wan sent her a voice transmission, “Do not harm her. Leave her to me!” As soon as she said this, her vermillion moon flew up from below and enveloped the icy woman within it.

The moon hurriedly revolved and it soon began to ripple, filling the hall with silhouettes of itself.

As Han Li stared at the twirling moon from down below, he was shocked to find his mind completely shaken and his focus broken. It was no wonder why the icy woman felt so fearful towards Nangong Wan’s Divine Incarnation Light.

After the moon revolved for the time it took to finish a cup of tea, Nangong Wan finally stopped; her face pale from exhaustion.

Then with a wave of her hand, the vermillion moon scattered into starlight with a light bang. Her Senior Martial Sister reappeared from within it as she floated in the air, still restrained by the Purple Cloudlace. However, the spiritual Qi in her body

grew completely calm and she remained unconscious with a strange smile on her face.

“What’s this?” Han Li bewilderedly said.

With a bit of color returned to her face, Nangong Wan smiled, “Those trapped by my Divine Incarnation Light are incapable of escaping it, even if they manifest their Nascent Soul. This technique also possesses an incredibly powerful bewitchment effect. My senior martial sister’s mind had been lost to the divine light for a time being. This way, we are able to spare her.”

Han Li rubbed his nose and helplessly said, “It was no surprise your Senior Martial Sister was so fearful of it. It is able to prevent even a Nascent Soul from manifesting. However, there would’ve been no need to go through such troublesome methods if we didn’t need to keep her alive. Lethal methods would’ve been far easier.”

Nangong Wan sighed and forced a smile, “Exterminating my senior martial sister, the sect’s grand elder, is unacceptable! Since I plan on following you, the Masked Moon Sect will already suffer a blow to its strength. If we kill her as well, the sect will become crippled. The past Masked Moon Sect Grand Elder had treated me with great kindness. Although I cannot sacrifice myself for the sect, I cannot bring myself to doom it to extinction.”

Han Li wryly smiled and said, “But your senior martial sister sure didn’t treat you leniently when she attacked you and restricted you.

“That doesn’t matter. Since I’ve spared her life, I can consider the debt to the sect’s previous master repaid. I won’t feel uneasy later when I’ve left with you. However, the last battle was truly dangerous. I truly didn’t know that Senior Martial Sister had a heaven-defying devilish artifact such as the Blood Devil Sword. It nearly led to a disastrous outcome. Had I known of this earlier...” Nangong Wan brightly flickered and she wore an apologetic expression.

However, Han Li simply smiled and showed not the slightest concern of it, “It’s nothing. Wasn’t the Blood Devil Sword incapable of harming me either way? Anyhow, let’s quickly acquire the restriction medallion and leave!”

Nangong Wan nodded her head in response. Silvermoon obediently shook her hand the unraveled the Purple Cloudlace from the icy woman.

Nangong Wan took several steps forward and bluntly tapped several places on her Senior Martial Sister’s body, placing several restrictions on top of it. She then reached out for the dark green storage pouch at her waist and gently shook it open. Then in a bright flash of light, a pile of items appeared on the floor.

When Han Li saw this, he curiously walked over.

The Heart Constraining Restriction Medallion was quite easy to find. Nangong Wan quickly took it into her hands with a smile.

As for Han Li, he quickly swept his gaze past the pile and suddenly beckoned a small exquisite ring into his hands. It was completely dark and lightless. Han Li frowned and brought the item to his eye and began to examine it.

Nangong Wan astonishedly said, “What are you doing with that? It looks like just an ordinary magic tool.”

Han Li chuckled and suddenly slapped his storage pouch, summoning a jade box into his hands. The box then opened in a flash of azure light, revealing an identical jet-black ring.

“Yi!” Nangong Wan couldn’t help but yelp in surprise.

Han Li brought the two rings together and felt that they both possess a similar absence of Qi. He then placed both of the rings back in the box before placing it into his storage pouch.

Nangong Wan sweetly smiled and said nothing else as her mind began to wander. Then paying no further attention to the large pile of items, she walked towards her Senior Martial Sister. With a

flash of red light glowing from her hand, Nangong Wan nimbly touched her Senior Martial Sister's head before closing her eyes in silence.

When Han Li saw this, he silently walked over with a faint smile on his face.

A short moment later, Nangong Wan opened her eyes and raised her hand, revealing the Blood Devil Sword in her grasp.

Nangong Wan glanced at the sword for only a moment before tossing the devilish artifact to Han Li, "This devilish artifact is mighty and proves to be a great threat against us so it'd be best to take it with us. While I am incapable of using this item, you are able to restrain this treasure with your golden lightning. Let's leave it in your hands!"

# Chapter 721: Return to Soaring Heavens City

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Although Han Li didn't know the full details of the Blood Devil Sword, he did know of its devilish Qi backlash. He quickly put it away, not wishing for Nangong Wan to use such a dangerous devilish artifact.

As for the other items such as the Light Stasis Mirror and her other treasures, Nangong Wan had no intention of taking them. It seemed she wished to save her Senior Martial Sister a bit of face. Not to mention that the Light Stasis Mirror was made famous while in this woman's possession; if others were to discover that it had been taken, it would cause no end of problems.

At that moment, Nangong Wan held the restriction talisman in her hand and gently squeezed it. In a flicker of red light, it released a thread of inky black Qi before fading away into nothingness.

In high spirits from dissolving the restriction, Nangong Wan sweetly smiled, "The Heart Containing Restriction is already dissolved. But before we go, I have to leave a message behind for my Senior Martial Sister."

Han Li didn't raise any opposition to her. Nangong Wan then took out a white jade slip and gracefully placed it against her forehead. The jade slip sparkled with a series of light before Nangong Wan's spiritual sense began to leave a message behind in the jade slip.

After the time it took to finish a cup of tea, she placed the jade slip on the pile of remaining items on the floor. She then placed them all in the icy woman's storage pouch and put it back on the icy woman's waist.

Nangong Wan smiled to Han Li with a trace of bashfulness, "Let's go. Senior Martial Sister is still under effects of my Divine Incarnation Light. It'll take her more than just a day for her to break free."

When Han Li saw Nangong Wan's gentle expression, his heart began to stir. He gently pulled her close to him and they flew out the hall in a streak of light.

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On a small nameless mountain on the border of the State of Beiliang, Nangong Wan stood underneath an ancient tree and frowned, "What do you mean? Why would you have me go ahead alone to the Drifting Cloud Sect?"

Han Li stood shoulder to shoulder with Nangong Wan. He slowly said, "My concubine and my Senior Martial Brother Lu have still remained in Soaring Heavens City for some reason. I reckon it likely has to do with the Moulan invasion. Since the two are related to me, I cannot go back on my own. I have no choice but to check up on them."

Nangong Wan glanced at Han Li with a displeased expression and said, "Since that's the case, I'll go with you. Why must I leave on my own?"

"Wan'er, you're a Masked Moon Sect Nascent Soul cultivator. There will be many high grade cultivators in the Nine Nations Union that will recognize you. Although I already taught you the Appearance Exchange Technique, those possessing greater cultivation than you will have a chance of seeing through your disguise. It'd be best for you to head back to the Drifting Cloud Sect first."

Nangong Wan wrinkled her nose and worriedly said, "But you've already offended our Masked Moon Sect and the Flowing Mind Sect. I feel uneasy that you're still heading to Soaring Heavens City."

Han Li chuckled and said, "Don't worry! It's not like you haven't seen what I'm capable of. Perhaps there are plenty of people with greater cultivation than mine in the Heavenly South, but there are sparsely few that are able to trap and kill me. Moreover, I am an

elder of the Drifting Cloud Sect. And with the full brunt of Moulan invasion bearing down upon the Nine Nations Union, they won't dare to meddle. Besides, I reckon your Senior Martial Sister will have followed what you've suggested to excuse your disappearance. Otherwise, her dealings with Wei Wuya will turn for the worse. There is hardly anything to worry about."

"Since you're insistant, I won't block you, but you'd best take care of yourself. So that you're a bit more safe, I'll hand this treasure over to you." Seeing that Han Li had made up his mind, she said little else and slapped her storage pouch. She then calmly handed an embroidered scarf over to Han Li.

Han Li felt a strange spiritual qi from the scarf and curiously asked, "What's this?"

Nangong Wan warmly explained, "This is a nameless ancient treasure that I unintentionally happened across while I was travelling. It is extremely convenient to use and will move in accordance to your thoughts. You might encounter danger on your trip. I will feel less worried if you have it by your side."

Han Li grew silent and stared at Nangong Wan's fluid eyes for a long while before seeing her faintly blush. He then took the item with a smile and carefully put it away.

When Nangong Wan saw this, she also wore a faint smile. Soon, something else came to mind and she took out a sparkling red jade pendant. "This Fire Repelling Ornament is a token I often carry around. Although I dislike being tied down with external affairs, there was a time where I had taken in a few in-name disciples out of a passing interest. Although they recognized me as their master, they weren't Masked Moon Sect Disciples. There are two that have currently opened a shop in Soaring Heavens City. If you are in need of assistance, hand over this token to them, and they will follow your instructions." She then whispered the names of these two disciples.

Han Li felt a trace of warmth and sentiment and silently committed the names to memory.

It had been a while since he's experienced someone else's concern.

...

A month later, Han Li found himself in the wilderness outside Soaring Heavens City. He glanced at the huge city from a distance in silence.

After he and Nangong Wan reluctantly parted, he made his way directly to the State of Yu. Along the way, he heard from a few passing cultivators that war had already begun on the borders of the State of Fengyuan and Yu.

The outcome: the main forces of the Nine Nations Union had suffered vast losses three times in a row. They had no choice but to rely on many grand spell formations to difficultly protect their vital strategic locations. The Nine Nations Union were clearly losing. When Han Li heard this, he frowned, but it was unfortunate that no one knew of the specific details, let alone the reason for such vast defeats. He could only continue on his way.

After he entered the State of Yu, he managed to acquire more detailed news. The Moulan spell warriors seemed to have found several huge savage beasts. The Nine Nations Union were caught unprepared by the attack, resulting in their repeated losses. This had greatly shocked Han Li when he heard this, and hastened on his way to Soaring Heavens City.

Although Soaring Heavens City had already removed their restrictions of flight, they had already activated a majority of the restrictions for the Greater Light Extinguishing Formation. Strange nearly indiscernible fluctuations filled the air. It appeared as if the cultivators in the city were already preparing for war.

After taking a glance at it, Han LI calmly flew to the city's front

gate.

There were eight cultivators guarding the gate. Apart from a Core Formation elder, the rest were Foundation Establishment cultivators. When they saw Han Li approach them, the Core Formation cultivator thought to interrogate him. But after his spiritual sense swept past Han Li, he wore great shock on his face.

Once the light surrounding Han Li's figure faded away, the old man respectfully saluted him, "Welcome Senior! Have you arrived to participate in the treaties meeting? May I ask for your esteemed name? I'm afraid I must register your name in accordance to the rules."

Han Li's mind stirred and expressionlessly asked, "Treaties meeting? What meeting?"

After a moment of surprise, the old man asked, "Senior isn't here to participate in the treaties meeting? Could it be that Senior is a vagrant cultivator?"

"No, I am a cultivator of the Heavenly Dao Alliance."

The old man carefully explained, "Because of the overbearing assault of the Moulan, our Nine Nations Union have found it difficult to block them. As such, there has been a treaties meeting being held with the other powers. Since Senior is a cultivator from the Heavenly Dao Alliance, so long as he states his name and sect, he can enter the city."

Han Li's eyes flickered and he said, "I am the Drifting Cloud Sect's Han Li!" He inwardly scowled. It appeared this trip wouldn't prove as simple as he imagined.

The old man didn't have the slightest intention of validating Han Li's name and he hastily stood to the side and allowed Han Li into the city.

Han Li nodded his head and he calmly entered the city.

There were far fewer cultivators on the streets of Soaring Heaven

City compared to when the trade fair was taking place. Furthermore, all of them wore worried expressions. It seems the news of the losing war had reached their ears.

Han Li directly flew towards his previous residence. If Mu Peiling and Senior Martial Brother Lu still hadn't left the city, they should be there.

Not long after, Han Li arrived before the building and used his spiritual sense to search for any auras. He found a weaker spiritual Qi fluctuation on the second floor. It should belong to Mu Peiling.

Han Li faintly smiled and silently opened the restriction before entering the pavilion.

Mu Peiling couldn't help but reveal delight upon seeing him, "My Lord, you've returned!"

# Chapter 722: The Heavenpeak Sect

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Han Li sighed and helplessly said, “Why is it that you and Senior Martial Brother Lu haven’t left as we discussed? I might’ve not returned.” He then took a glance at Mu Peiling and smiled, “But I didn’t think that you’d actually break through your bottleneck so quickly! Congratulations on entering mid Foundation Establishment stage!”

“I broke through by chance half a month ago thanks to the medicine pills my Lord has given me. It wouldn’t have been the case otherwise.” Mu Peiling spoke with great excitement and appeared all the more beautiful for it. Han Li felt his mind shake and calmed down once he stroked his nose.

Han Li then casually asked, “Does your prolonged stay with Senior Martial Brother Lu in Soaring Heavens City have to do with the spell warriors?”

Mu Peiling bit her lip and carefully said, “My Lord already guessed it. Senior Lu and I planned on returning once the trade fair ended, but who could’ve thought that news of the spell warrior invasion had spread before the trade fair concluded. As a Heavenly Dao Alliance Nascent Soul cultivator, he had no choice but to remain and negotiate a plan with the other powers. I also remained behind as a result.”

“In that case, I can’t blame you. But where is Senior Martial Brother Lu —” Han Li suddenly wore an odd expression when he interrupted himself.

Mu Peiling was startled by this sudden stop. Before she realized what Han Li intended, she suddenly heard a young man’s voice from outside the building, “Fellow Daoist Mu, are you there? I am Bai Shujun. I wish to discuss something with you.”

After Han Li swept his spiritual sense past him, he discovered a Core Formation youth with a scholarly appearance that was

standing outside the building's restrictions. Han Li pensively asked, "Who is this? It seems you've made friends!"

In the instant Mu Peiling heard the man's voice, he face instantly paled. She hastily explained, "Lord, please don't misunderstand. This person is a disciple of a Heavenpeak Sect Elder. We had unintentionally met a few days ago and he had been bothering me ceaselessly ever since. I've already said that I am your concubine, but this person has bothered me ever since. I'll drive him away right now."

Han Li raised his brow and asked, "So it was like that? Does Senior Martial Brother Lu know of this?"

Mu Peiling was relieved that Han Li wasn't angry and replied with a sigh of relief, "I've already spoke to Senior Lu of this matter, but Senior Lu seemed to recognize this elder of the Heavenpeak Sect. He even seemed somewhat fearful of him. For the time being, he's left me to fend for myself with regards to his matter. He's been waiting for Lord to return before dealing with this matter.

After a moment of silence, Han Li coldly smiled, "Oh! Isn't the Heavenpeak Sect one of the four great sects of the Righteous Dao Alliance? It is no wonder why Senior Martial Brother Lu was so careful in handling this matter. However, this meager Core Formation cultivator must be quite brave to act so imprudently. Follow me out. Let's see what this Junior intends to do."

Mu Peiling respectfully replied, "As you command, Master!"

At that moment, Han Li wordlessly climbed down to the ground floor with Mu Peiling closely following after her.

"Fellow Daoist Mu, you've finally— Yi! This Senior is..." When the youth named Bai Shujun saw someone leaving the building, he originally believed it to be the woman he fancied. But when he saw Han Li with his profound cultivation, his expression vastly changed.

At that moment, Mu Peiling followed behind Han Li and stood closely behind him. When the youth saw this, his expression wavered several times.

Han Li's expression grew sullen and he spoke bluntly to the youth, "You are a disciple of the Heavenpeak Sect?"

Displaying an unordinary guile, he regained his calm after only a moment even as he faced a Nascent Soul cultivator like Han Li. He then spoke with a courteous tone, "That's right. This Junior is a disciple of the Heavenpeak Sect Elder Lu [1]. Could it be that you are Senior Han?"

"Speak! What are you intentions in coming here? Why is it that you bother my concubine without end? You should have some other purpose in performing such a brainless task." Han Li's harsh tone had caused a trace of astonishment to appear from Mu Peiling's face.

Bai Shujun smiled and eloquently said, "Senior is wise! In truth my master wishes to meet you, but since there has been no news of Senior Han, Junior has done this. However, I am truly fond of Fellow Daoist Mu. If Senior would agree to accommodate me, I wouldn't be able to thank you enough!"

"Can't thank me enough? What use is your gratitude? Don't get caught up in your dreams! I have no such habit of giving my own concubines to others. I also have no connection with your Heavenpeak Sect, so why is it that you've come to find me?"

Han Li narrowed his eyes and glanced in an empty area. After squinting his eyes, he wore a weird smile and suddenly released an astonishing spiritual pressure from his body.

Bai Shujun recoiled several steps with a greatly alarmed expression. Bearing a pressure of what seemed to be a huge mountain, his legs folded and he fell to a half kneel. He hastily attempted to resist, but after his body trembled several times, his knees still remained unsteady.

As he knelt, a white silhouette suddenly appeared in front of Bai Shujin. He gently patted Bai Shujun's shoulder and suddenly relieved him of the pressure, allowing him to stand once more.

The white silhouette was a white-robed old man with light grey hair and a friendly face. As Han Li examined him, the old man smiled at him and said, "Fellow Daoist Han, please don't be angry. My disciple has been doing this on my command. How could I meet you otherwise?"

When Han Li saw the old man, the pressure emitting from his body vanished and his expression became calm once more as if it had never happened. "Who is your esteemed self? And why do you wish to see me? If I remember correctly, this will be the first time I ever made contact with you and your sect."

"Hehe! This old man goes by the name of Lu Weiying, and is an elder of the Heavenpeak Sect. As for why I wish to see you, this is not a convenient place to speak of it. If Fellow Daoist wishes to know why, let us meet later tonight. At that time, Fellow daoist will surely come to know the details." Showing not the slightest anger, he waved his hand and tossed a green jade slip he had already prepared to Han Li.

Han Li expressionlessly waved his arm and caught the jade slip in an azure mist. After sinking his spiritual sense into the jade slip, he found the details of a location and thought to ask about it, but when he raised his head, the old man had already saluted him and was leading Bai Shujun away.

Han Li frowned. He acted rather mysteriously, but they seemed to misunderstand that Han Li had been hiding in Soaring Heavens City all this time.

Han Li rubbed his chin and felt this matter to be somewhat unclear. As such, he left the matter alone for now and brought Mu Peiling back into their residence.

After Han Li entered the pavilion, he calmly asked, "Where is

Senior Martial Brother Lu currently?” It was as if he had thrown the recent matter to the back of his mind.

I heard that the war situation was dire and Senior Lu went to discuss a countermeasure with the other powers.”

Han Li interestedly asked, “Where are they having this discussion?”

“It is at Soaring Heavens City’s official hall. I heard that only Nascent Soul cultivates affiliated with a superpower are allowed to attend. Does my Lord wish to go take a look?”

“The official hall?” Han Li recalled a huge palace hall at the center of the city that was heavily covered in restrictions.

“Alright, I do wish to see how the matters of spell warriors are being handled. Wait here and don’t go out without a reason.” With his mind set, he departed to where his Senior Martial Brother Lu was located.

The official hall was the towering building built at the center of the city, and was extremely noticeable. Apart from matters concerning the life or death of the Nine Nations Union, it was hardly ever used.

But now that the Moulan had begun another assault since their ceasefire a hundred years ago, the upper echelon of the Nine Nations Union showed no hesitation in opening this hall and convening with cultivators of other powers. After all, with the overbearing invasion of the Moulan spell warriors, it would be extremely difficult for the Nine Nations Union to defend against them alone.

When Han Li arrived in front of the official hall, a guard standing at the front noticed Han Li’s cultivation and asked for his name before reporting it to his superior. Soon, Han Li was granted permission and a cultivator respectfully led him inside the official hall.

There couldn't be said to be many Nascent Soul cultivators in the meeting, only over a dozen, far fewer than Han Li had imagined. However, Han Li understood that despite the large number of Nascent Soul cultivators that had gathered at Soaring Heavens City, there was no need for each of them to personally attend. They merely had their power's representative stand in their place.

As for Senior Martial Brother Lu, he was currently sitting on a chair to the left. He smiled when he caught sight of Han Li. Closely sitting beside him was the Child Fire Dragon.

Apart from the yellow-robed old man, Han Li found the others to be unfamiliar. After taking two glances at the yellow-robed old man, he couldn't help but inwardly sigh. This old man was Martial Ancestor Ling Hu of Yellow Maple Valley!

[1] The Heavenpeak Sect Elder is surnamed 魯 Lu, and the Drifting Cloud Sect Elder, Han Li's Senior Martial Brother is surnamed Lu 呂. They are homonyms.

# Chapter 723: Discussion

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When Martial Ancestor Linghu spotted Han Li, he didn't reveal the slightest change in expression. It was unknown whether he was hiding his emotions with his profound shrewdness or that he simply didn't recognize the past Foundation Establishment disciple.

Han Li's gaze shifted to the others in the hall. At the center of the hall there was an old man with a purple face and a gorgeous woman in palace robes. When Han Li swept his spiritual sense past them, his heart trembled. The two were mid Nascent Soul cultivators, the main representatives of the Nine Nations Union.

As Han Li examined the other cultivators in the hall, they had examined him as well. A majority of them were surprised by Han Li's appearance as a youth. Hardly any male cultivators cultivated techniques for maintaining youthful appearances.

The Drifting Cloud Sect Elder Lu called out to Han Li with a smile, "Junior Martial Brother Han, you've finally arrived. Have a seat. We were having a discussion with Sect Master Wu about the Moulan invasion."

The Child Fire Dragon also smiled and kindly nodded his head.

Following suit, Han Li smiled and saluted the other cultivators in the hall before taking a seat by his Senior Martial Brother Lu.

The purple-faced cultivator took a seat across from Han Li and smiled, "So this is the Drifting Cloud Sect's Fellow Daoist Han. I am the Enlightened Leaf Sect's Wu Peng. We just heard from Brother Lu that Fellow Daoist had entered Nascent Soul stage only after two hundred years of cultivation. You truly a genius among the cultivators in the Heavenly South. Perhaps you will be met with great success on the Great Dao!"

Although Han Li's cultivation was still a grade lower than his

own, he didn't dare to underestimate Han Li's future potential.

"Sect Master Wu is being polite. I only managed to enter Nascent Soul stage from a fluke. I don't dare to speak of any future obtainments in the Great Dao." As the Enlightened Leaf Sect were one of the sects that stood side by side with the Flowing Mind Sect in the Nine Nations Union, Han Li didn't dare to grow overly familiar with him and simply gave a polite response.

As Han Li spoke, his gaze fell onto the beautiful middle-aged woman that stood at the old man's side. Since the purple-faced old man was the Enlightened Leaf Sect Master, this beautiful woman was likely a cultivator from the Flowing Mind Sect.

As Han Li began to ponder, the purple-faced old man, Wu Peng, sighed and said, "This is the Flowing Mind Sect's Lady Qi. She will handle matters with regards to the Nine Nations Union along my side. The other Fellow Daoists are..."

The old man gave Han Li an introduction to the other cultivators in the hall. When Martial Ancestor Linghu was introduced, he simply gave a curt response, nothing out of the ordinary.

Han Li's heart faintly trembled but he simply nodded.

After introductions were finished, Wu Peng's expression grew tense, "Fellow Daoist Han, you've come just in time. We were currently discussing how the vast power of the spell warriors are greatly beyond our expectations. I've already heard from the Elder Yu and the others that they've already suffered a great defeat. Even two important areas are about to have their grand formations broken by the huge beasts the Moulan control. We have many casualties in the war against the Moulan, including even Fellow Daoist Huan of the Shadowform Sect. He will be the third Nascent Soul cultivator to have perished. There is a pressing need for assistance from all powers due to the overbearing Moulan assault."

The smiles of all the cultivators present had disappeared once Wu Peng had solemnly spoken. A grave atmosphere immediately filled

the hall.

A green-robed old man with a sharp, thin nose sullenly said, “Sect Master Wu, we’ve also have a bit of information ourselves considering we have sent our own disciples out in accordance to the pact. However, we still don’t have concrete information on the true circumstances behind Fellow Daoist Feng’s defeat. Could Brother Wu give us an detailed explanation on the matter?”

It is unfathomable that so many Nascent Soul cultivators have fallen in such a short amount of time. Could it be that high grade spell warriors have already begun to take action?”

When Han Li heard this, he took another look at the old man. From Wu Peng’s introduction, he was an elder of the Devil Dao’s Controlling Spirit Sect. He didn’t know whether or not he had a relation to Liu Yu or Han Yunzhi.

Wu Peng responded with an odd expression, “We still don’t have information on whether or not their high grade cultivators are acting in full force. However, Fellow Daoist Feng and Fellow Daoist Xin were verified to have perished in a one on one battle. They were not surrounded.”

When the green-robed old man heard him, he revealed alarm, “Impossible. Even if they were defeated by a mid Nascent Soul stage spell warrior, they would still be able to flee for their lives. Could it be that the Moulan Divine Sages have begun to act?”

Already anticipating his question, Wu Peng readily said, “No, the two were only early Nascent Soul spell warriors. However, they were rather odd. Not only were their spirit techniques far beyond what other spell warriors of the same grade were capable of, they also used an incredibly strange treasure. Just as the two Fellow Daoists manifested their Nascent Souls upon defeat, they were trapped by this treasure and were rendered incapable of using instantaneous movement, leading to their demise.”

The green robed old man felt his breath run cold. He asked with

slight disbelief, “What kind of treasure is capable of stopping a Nascent Soul’s instantaneous movement? Is it an ancient treasure? A magic treasure?”

The cultivators who listened had vastly changed expressions. The reason why it was extremely difficult to kill a Nascent Soul cultivator was cause of how easy it was for a Nascent Soul to escape once it manifested. It came as a great shock to the cultivators present that there was a treasure capable of restraining a Nascent Soul.

“Our disciples that witnessed the battle weren’t able to clearly see it. But when it was activated, it momentarily flashed with red-black light and seemed unblockable. Furthermore...” Wu Peng trailed off with a hesitant expression.

The green-robed old man unhappily said, “Fellow Daoist Wu, with matters having reached this far, what is it that you find hard to say?”

The Flowing Mind Sect’s Lady Qi smiled and spoke on behalf of Wu Peng, “It’s not that Brother Wu finds it hard to say. He only hesitates to speak because he feels that the matter is uncertain. Allow me to say it!” As a fellow member of the Nine Nations Union, it was natural for her to assist him.

Han Li grew greatly curious by their words. The others were also more or less waiting for what Lady Qi had to say.

Lady Qi sighed and explained, “The disciples observing the previous battles have noted that the two Nascent Soul spell warriors appeared almost as if they were feeding off the souls of those who died in battle, regardless of whether the souls had belonged to spell warriors or cultivators. As a result, Sect Master Wu became doubtful as to whether these two spell warriors are actually human, instead being some sort of heretical transformation.

But since the two didn’t emit an obvious demonic or ghost Qi

from their body, the disciples were incapable of making any precise judgements. Of course, there is also the matter of the sudden appearance of the huge fearsome beasts that appeared amongst the ranks of the spell warriors; it seems to have something to do with the appearance of these new spell warriors. We suspect that the Moulan have begun to collaborate with other powers. This explains how they were able invade the Heavenly South on such a vast scale.”

The cultivators in the hall were all stunned by her words. In his alarm, Ancestor Linghu solemnly asked, “Not human? Lady Qi means to say that they are transformed demon beasts?””

Wu Peng solemnly said, “That should be the case. Even if they aren’t demon beasts, they may be heretical cultivators that cultivate the Ghost or Demon Dao. If that were the case, it’d be far more troublesome than encountering transformed demon beasts.”

Han Li ‘s expression stirred as he slowly asked, “When did Sect Master Wu come by this information?”

Wu Peng blinked in surprise and twirled his long beard with curiosity, “This information came from the report on the last battle. Why does Fellow Daoist Han ask this?”

Han Li held his chin in his hand and pensively answered, “It’s nothing. I merely felt that regardless of whether these unfamiliar spell warriors are men or demons, they have no fear of revealing their identity to us, given that they dared to act so boldly at the beginning of this war. It appears the Moulan will not be attempting a battle of attrition as they did in the past. They will most likely use thunderous strikes, seeking decisive battles with our main forces. Could it be that a great change had occurred in the Moulan Plains?”

Wu Peng and Lady Qi both glanced at each other with astonishment upon hearing Han Li’s analysis. The other cultivators also grew sullen. It was quite natural that they picked

up on what Han Li meant.

In the past, the Moulans invasions were always battles of attrition — with each war lasting years if they were short, but decades if they were long.

Whenever this happened, both sides of the conflict had always avoided direct confrontations or their main forces as it would only result in a pyrrhic victory at best, with most of the forces on either sides annihilated.

Both the Heavenly South and the Moulan spell warriors had no such desire for such heavy losses of strength. This was further strengthened by the fact that the Moulan consisted of many tribes as the Heavenly South were consisted of grand alliances of variously sized sects; neither side were able to work entirely as one.

But now, the Moulan were acting with overwhelming force, a vast change from their previous invasions. With the addition of those huge sage beasts and those strange spell warriors, the changes from the Moulan were clear to see.

A long while later, Wu Peng bitterly smiled and spoke with a grave tone, “Brother Han’s words are reasonable. It seems there is something amiss with the Moulan; we cannot be careless. The sects in the Heavenly South must form a second army to help the Nine Nations Union to resist them. Else, the Moulan will break through and shatter us. I hope you Fellow Daoists will return quickly and explain this matter to your sects. The Nine Nations Union will not be able to hold out for much longer.

# Chapter 724: Linghus Request

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After Lady Qi pondered for a moment, she said, “Although Fellow Daoist Han’s words are very likely, they are still only a guess. I hope you Fellow Daoists will discuss these matters only among other Nascent Soul cultivators in order to prevent an unnecessary chaos. However, if the Moulan truly wishes to have a grand confrontation, their Divine Sages will be certain to take action. These late Nascent Soul stage spell warriors aren’t something we are able to contend against. I will be informing Elder Wei Wuya of this, and see whether or not the three great cultivators can gather together and deal with this matter.”

A shriveled old man worriedly nodded his head, “Lady Qi makes sense. This matter is urgent. When we return, we will immediately inform our sect of this matter.”

The other cultivators also agreed, all knowing that the matter was grave.

Afterwards, the cultivators began to discuss about a few particulars and decided to first send some reinforcements to slow down the Moulan, buying the various powers the time they needed to prepare.

Han Li, Senior Martial Brother Lu, and the Child Fire Dragon walked out of the hall side by side. When they arrived outside, Han Li frowned.

Elder Lu caught sight of Han LI’s expression and asked with surprise, “Is there something wrong Junior Martial Brother?”

“It’s nothing. There is just an old acquaintance that wishes to see me. I’m afraid that it will take a moment. Senior Martial Brother Lu, Brother Lan, please go ahead. I’ll quickly return!”

Elder Lu nodded his head and smiled, “Yes, of course. We’ll first head back to have a discussion amongst the cultivators of the

Heavenly Dao Alliance and then send information back to our Senior Martial Brother. We'll see how each of our alliance's sects will handle the matter."

The Child Fire Dragon also responded with a smile.

Han Li saluted in response before slowly walking away.

Elder Lu stood at the hall's entrance and glanced in the direction that Han Li had taken.

"Is there something that Brother Lu is worried about?" The Child Fire Dragon asked with a mysterious smile.

Although Elder Lu's heart was uneasy, he maintained a calm exterior, "Worried? What is there to be worried about?"

The Child Fire Dragon smiled and said, "Brother Lu should have already guessed. Fellow Daoist Han was originally from Yellow Maple Valley and that Eccentric Linghu is nearing the end of his lifespan like your Senior Martial Brother. As Eccentric Linghu is the only Nascent Soul cultivator in Yellow Maple Valley, he may already be burning with anxiousness. While this might not matter to a smaller sect, to a sect as large as Yellow Maple Valley, the absence of the protection of a Nascent Soul cultivator could likely lead to a sect's extermination. It would be odd if Eccentric Linghu wasn't the one who had given Han Li the voice transmission."

Brother Lu didn't immediately respond. Instead, he pondered to himself for a moment before asking, "How does Brother Lan know of Junior Martial Brother Han's origins? I do not recall mentioning them."

The Child Fire Dragon bluntly explained, "There was no need for Brother Lu to speak of it. Since your sect suddenly acquired a young newly ascended elder, our Ancient Sword Sect naturally felt the need to investigate."

Elder Lu had nothing to say in response. But after a moment, he shook his head and said, "Junior Martial Brother Han simply said

that he was going to see an old acquaintance. If he originally intended to go back to Yellow Maple Valley, he would've already done so. He wouldn't have waited until now!"

The Child Fire Dragon shook his head, "That may be true, but Eccentric Linghu is a cunning old fox. Since you invited Han Li over, he should have some confidence of convincing him."

Elder Lu grew silent for a moment. Eventually, a troubled expression appeared on his face and he sighed, "Let's leave it to fate. If Junior Martial Brother Han truly wishes to return to Yellow Maple Valley, what can my Senior Martial Brother or I do to stop him?"

...

Han Li stood in a small remote street and began to continuously observe his surroundings. He then caught sight of a two story pavilion. It was only about twenty meters wide with a small banner at its entrance that wrote 'Tea' on it. There were two yellow-robed Foundation Establishment cultivators standing there.

Han Li smiled for a moment before approaching it.

When the two saw Han Li walk over, they respectfully saluted him, "Greetings Senior Han! Martial Ancestor is respectfully waiting for you!"

Han Li nodded his head and wordlessly entered.

The entire building was extremely quiet as if there were no one there. Han Li hesitated before climbing up to the second floor. As a result, he found someone calmly waiting for him. He was wearing yellow robes and had a sallow complexion — he was Ancestor Linghu who he has just seen previously in the hall.

He was currently sitting at the octagonal table in the center of the room, and was currently sipping on a cup of tea.

Han Li's gaze flickered and he walked forward without

hesitation. He silently took a seat across from Ancestor Linghu, noticing that there was a teacup that had already been prepared for him.

Ancestor Linghu said nothing. He simply waved his hand and caused the teapot on the table to float. It poured some tea in the cup in front of him before floating back down.

Eccentric Linghu narrowed his eyes and glanced at Han Li. He slowly said, “The spirit tea here is good. Will you not give it a taste?”

Han Li smiled and brought the cup up to his eyes, glancing at the clear green liquid within.

Han Li then took a sip and said, “It is quite decent. It is truly a grade higher than common spirit teas.”

Eccentric Linghu put down the tea and chuckled. He unhurriedly said, “It seems Fellow Daoist Han is also one fond of tea. It seems I was right to meet you here.”

Holding no intention to speak in circles, Han Li bluntly said, “Surely you didn’t invite me here only to sample this spirit tea! If you have something to say, then say it.”

This Ancestor Linghu clearly recognized him. Han Li could already guess why he was invited here.

“Since Fellow Daoist is so impatient, I won’t speak in circles. Would Fellow Dan be willing to return to Yellow Maple Valley as an elder?” Ancestor Linghu calmly spoke as if he were speaking of a minor issue.

“Return to Yellow Maple Valley?” Han Li didn’t reveal the slightest change in expression and simply looked down at the tea cup in his hand.

A bright glint shined from Ancestor Linghu’s eyes and he slowly said, “Needless to mention how you were treated wrongly in the past, I must tell you that my lifespan is running short. I only have

twenty years more at beast before I expire. So long as you return, Yellow Maple Valley will be yours. Surely you wouldn't have held onto some minor grudge for so long!"

Han Li raised his head and stared at Ancestor Linghu. He shook his head, "I no longer care about the matters of the past. If I found myself in your position, I would perhaps do the same. However, I am currently an elder of the Drifting Cloud Sect. I have no intention of joining your sect. Fellow Daoist Linghu, you had best find another cultivator."

Ancestor Linghu coldly smiled, "Of course I know you've joined the Drifting Cloud Sect. However, the Drifting Cloud Sect still has two other elders. Do you not have to share control? Wouldn't you be happy to be the sole holder of power?"

Han Li pursed his lips, forming a faint sneer. "I believe you misunderstand. I didn't enter a sect for authority. I merely wished to find a suitable place for cultivation. I have no interest in control over a sect."

Ancestor Linghu frowned, but he soon regained his calm.

"Fellow Daoist Han doesn't realize how beneficial is it towards your cultivation to be the sole power over a sect. Not only will you not have to trouble yourself to find rare medicines and materials, you will gain an incomparable status in the cultivation world. Moreover, don't you have the slightest interest in your past sect members? Many cultivators of your generation are still within Yellow Maple Valley. If there isn't a Nascent Soul cultivator to protect them, they may as well be extinguished in a single night by a coalition of other sects. Who knows what will happen to them?" Ancestor Linghu had finally begun to appeal to emotion.

Han Li smiled and carelessly said, "I have no lack of spirit medicines and materials as a Drifting Cloud Sect Elder. And how could I care for something as hollow as status and reputation in the cultivation world? As for the death of the sect, it had always been a

common occurrence. No matter how long the sect existed, they eventually disappear with their legacy lost. As for my old sect members, I will not be involved with them. May fate treat them kindly.”

# Chapter 725: Jade Talisman

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When Ancestor Linghu heard Han LI's response, he frowned and didn't speak for a time. Instead, he slowly raised the tea cup and took a sip.

He then said, "Fellow Daoist Han, this is obvious to me, but I am very much unlike you. I've spent over a thousand years overseeing Yellow Maple Valley and I've grown extremely attached to it. I don't wish for its legacy to be severed once I die. It seems Fellow Daoist has little interest in fame or profit. However, if Fellow Daoist is willing to succeed the position as the grand elder of Yellow Maple Valley, I am willing to present my own riches to you, the treasures that I have collected over many years. They will be greatly useful to your future cultivation."

After a moment of shock, Han Li narrowed his eyes and asked, "You will leave your inheritance to me? If I recall correctly, you should have personal disciples!"

Ancestor Linghu coldly smiled, "Among my disciples, the highest only holds mid Core Formation stage cultivation. If I leave my inheritance with them, it will only invite calamity. Even if Fellow Daoist doesn't accept, I will not be leaving a majority of my treasures to the sect."

Han Li rubbed his chin and pondered.

To tell the truth, Han Li felt some temptation by Ancestor Linghu's words. However, he clearly understood that if he were to accept the position as a Yellow Maple Valley elder, he would likely have to face many problems within the Six Sects of Yue and the Nine Nations Union — matters that would settle for quite some time.

Furthermore, he would have more authority as the sole elder of Yellow Maple Valley, but conversely, he would be sacrificing the freedoms that he had with the Drifting Cloud Sect. More

importantly was the problem he would have when he faced the Masked Moon Sect.

After a long moment of thought, Han Li shook his head, “Many thanks for your kind offer. However, I feel that this matter shouldn’t be mentioned any further.”

Ancestor Linghu wasn’t angered upon hearing this — rather, his face only revealed helplessness.

Ancestor Linghu sighed and said, “Since you’ve refused these conditions, it seems Fellow Daoist Han is unwilling to be involved with the Six Sects of Yue. If that’s the case, I have another proposal.

Han Li’s expression stirred with curiosity, “Another proposal?”

Ancestor Linghu bitterly smiled, “Since Fellow Daoist doesn’t wish to be an elder of Yellow Maple Valley, how about I give you three treasures in exchange for three requests for help from Yellow Maple Valley? Of course, these requests will be within your capabilities.”

After a moment of thought, Han Li quickly nodded his head, “Three requests within my capabilities? I can accept those conditions.”

Ancestor Linghu wore a faint smile on his face and placed three items on the table. It seemed he had prepared them beforehand.

Without another word, Han Li’s eyes wandered onto the three items on the table. There was a small shiny blue shield, a red jade bottle, and a jet-black jade pendant.

Showing not restraint, he grabbed onto the small blue shield. When the small shield entered his grasp, it grew soft and light as if nothing was there. He examined it more thoroughly in surprise, still not knowing what it was refined from.

Ancestor Linghu glanced at the blue shield with reluctance, “There was an ancient treasure I acquired in my youth, and had

accompanied me for a long while. I simply called it as the Bluelight Shield. Its abilities are powerful and is particularly effective at resisting the attacks of fire-attribute attacks. You will find this to be true when you test it.”

Han Li stroked the shield for a moment before returning it to the table. From how strange the treasure appeared, Ancestor Linghu’s words should hold true. He then grabbed onto the red jade bottle.

“In the past, I snuck deep into the Moulan Plains and exterminated a grade seven Ironwing Demon Beast. That bottle contains its core — an incredibly rare material. It will have no shortage of uses.”

‘A grade seven demon core?’ Han Li inwardly sighed but he displayed no change in expression. Although grade seven demon cores were extremely rare items in the Heavenly South, they were of little value to him.

As a result, he smiled and opened the medicine bottle. After taking a glance at it, he put it back in its original location. His eyes then turned to the last item on the table. This time, Ancestor Linghu simply wore a strange smile instead of taking the initiative to introduce it.

Han Li’s gaze silently wandered around the jade pendant.

After pondering for a spell, Han Li doubtfully asked, “This jade talisman was something that was refined by ancient cultivators?”

A trace of surprise appeared on Ancestor Linghu’s face. He curiously asked, “Fellow Daoist Han has seen a jade talisman before? According to what I know, these talismans were unique even during times of antiquity. They should’ve vanished in the Heavenly South, and even fewer cultivators of this land should know of them.”

Han Li smiled, “I merely encountered a Fellow Daoist that happened to know of these things. I heard of it from them.”

Ancestor Linghu glanced at the black jade talisman on the table and said, “This jade talisman was something that I had risked my life to obtain. It is definitely valuable. Although I still haven’t managed to grasp the proper way to use it and can only use a fraction of its abilities, the jade talisman’s abilities are shocking. I’ve used it several times to strike down enemies. It should be a quality item that was meticulously created by an ancient cultivator specializing in talismans.”

Ancestor Linghu summoned the talisman into his hand and chanted an ancient and obscure incantation with muffled voice, transforming the jade talisman into a ball of black light. A bone-chilling Yin wind then blew past him, forming a demonic black-red hand above Ancestor Linghu’s head.

This demonic hand shined with black-red light and was over a meter wide. Not only did it occasionally flickered with Yin flames, it also carried an indescribable, eerie Qi that filled with entire teahouse with its appearance.

Han Li’s heart trembled upon seeing it.

“After I acquired this jade talisman, I spent several hundreds of years studying it before managing to use this single divine ability. Unless this Profound Ghosthand is attacked by a Yang type treasure, it will be nearly invulnerable. As for any magic or ancient treasures it may hold, their abilities will immediately diminish and they will obediently stay captured. Even top grade treasures will have their might and spirituality reduced.”

As Ancestor Linghu spoke, he willed the large black hand to swell several times in size and grab a nearby table.

Black Yin flame silently swept past the wooden table and instantly consumed, leaving not even ash behind.

Han Li felt his breath turn cold at the sight.

This hand appeared like a profound Devil Dao ability to attack

with manifested spiritual sense, but since the black hand originated from the jade talisman, there was no fear of any backlash from any harm the spiritual sense may experience. As for the strange Yin fire, that should be an different divine ability.

“This jade talisman is certain to possess other divine abilities. Unfortunately, I don’t have much time yet and I don’t have many more opportunities to discover its secrets. On the contrary, Fellow Daoist Han still has much time to unlock its secrets. However, a majority of its power has already been consumed. You had best use it cautiously.” Ancestor Linghu then pointed to the black hand and had it turn back into a ball of black light before flying back to the table in the form of a jade talisman.

Han Li’s wore a smile, but he was very much interested in the jade talisman. Even if the talisman wasn’t as powerful as Ancestor Linghu had described, he would be able to learn much of the ancient cultivator talisman techniques from the jade talisman itself. It would prove to be of great assistance to him.

Once Ancestor Linghu finished presenting the items, he swept his sleeve across the table and the three items disappeared, leaving three white translucent white jade discs in their place.

Han Li turned his eyes towards Ancestor Linghu and calmly said, “These formation disks are magic tools that I had personally refined. They are incapable of being replicated. After you die, I will not decline a request that Yellow Maple Valley will have of me.”

Ancestor Linghu smiled and said, “Good. With these words, I will be able to continue onto other matters.”

Now that the matter was finished, Han Li took his leave as he had no further business there. Ancestor Linghu didn’t offer much resistance and simply spoke a few polite words as he watched Han Li walk away.

Once Ancestor Linghu was alone, his smile faded and he stared at the table, deep into through.

Han Li didn't immediately return to his residence once he left the teahouse. Instead, he glanced at the sky and found a remote area before taking out the jade slip that the Heavenpeak Sect Elder had given him. After carefully reading it with his spiritual sense, he wore a hesitant expression.

# Chapter 726: Heaven-Earth Rings

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Han Li fiddled with the jade slip in his hand as he pondered. Then with a flash of azure light, the jade slip vanished and Han Li began to walk in large strides towards the location it described.

After passing through a majority of Soaring Heavens City, Han Li arrived at a remote corner of the city where an ordinary mixed-goods store was located. This store had a black wooden sign on its entrance, reading the “Jade Union Pavilion” in large flamboyant calligraphy.

Han Li examined it before slowly walking into the building. The interior wasn’t large — he only walked into a hall that was about twenty meters in length. A majority of the items being sold were common materials and talismans. To the side, there was an exquisite side door that led to the back.

There was a middle-aged man in grey robes behind the sales counter near the entrance. He appeared to be looking through a small ledger. Han Li swept his spiritual sense past him and saw that his cultivation was very low, only in the realm of Qi Condensation. Furthermore, the shopkeeper’s appearance was rather ordinary.

The middle-aged shopkeeper immediately smiled and stood up upon seeing Han Li ender and he quickly welcomed him.

“Senior, what is it you wish to look at? My store is filled with all sort of goods. It will definitely be to your satisfaction.”

Han Li smiled and he flipped his hand, revealing the green jade slip in his grasp. After he placed it in the shopkeeper’s hands, the shopkeeper had a vast change of expression and he quickly placed it away. He asked with a respectful tone, “May I ask for Senior’s name?”

Han Li casually answered, “Han Li!”

“So it turned out to be Senior Han. Martial Ancestor has already mentioned Senior Han would be coming, but I hadn’t expected it to be this soon. Please follow me.” The middle-aged man invited Han Li to the back once he finished speaking. Han Li nodded his head and silently entered.

To his surprise, it led to a warehouse with all sorts of cabinets and trunks placed all over. The walls were particularly filled to the brim.

The middle-aged man stepped forward and walked in front of wood cabinet. He gently pushed one of the corners, causing two of the adjacent cabinets to separate and reveal a stairway.

The middle-aged shopkeeper led the way and explained, “Out of fear that occasional guests would sense any restriction, we had a mechanism placed from the mortal realm.”

Han Li didn’t feel particularly surprised by this.

The middle-aged man then stepped on a tile and caused a wall to open with a muffle creak, revealing an eerie passageway down.

The shopkeeper stood to the side and smiled, “This Junior doesn’t have the qualifications to enter. Senior must go on his own.”

Han Li frowned and swept his spiritual sense downwards and felt faint spiritual Qi fluctuations in the passageway. When he examined further, he found a layer of restrictions there, but Han Li was able to judge it with his spell formation knowledge to be a simple spirit obstruction barrier. Although Han Li could forcefully break through it, the people within it would be sure to notice it.

Han Li revealed slight hesitation. Although he was sure that the Heavenspeak Sect elder wouldn’t try anything foolish within Soaring Heavens City, he didn’t wish to enter a sealed area with someone whom he didn’t know was friend or foe.

As Han Li hesitated, the people from within formation seemed to

guess what Han Li thinking. A moment later, the barrier was removed, allowing Han Li's spiritual sense to see within. Han Li's heart stirred at the deliberate show of trust, and he was amazed by what he discovered.

"It's him! That's a surprise." Han Li muttered to himself and walked down the passage without any further hesitation.

When the middle-aged man saw that Han Li descended, he sealed the passage and return the cabinets to normal before going back to tend to the shop.

The passage was very long, and descended about a hundred meters deep to preserve its secretive nature. Eventually, Han Li saw the light from within the darkness and knew that he had arrived at an exit. He quickened his pace and found himself in a stone room.

The room was rather large, but it was completely empty apart from a few praying mats. Facing its entrance were two men that were sitting cross-legged on such a mat. They both looked at Han Li with a smile. Han Li remained silent, choosing first the find an empty prayer mat to sit on.

Han Li smiled to one of the two and returned the smile, "I absolutely didn't think that Fellow Daoist would find me. It is truly a surprise to find you here."

This person wore a tall crown and blue robes. Marquis Nanlong wryly smiled and said, "Truly, even I found it difficult to believe that I had escaped calamity. When we separated, I believed I had escaped, but they had tracked me down using a secret technique. They had caught up to me at the edge of the Moulan Plains. However, the Heavens favor the persistent, and I later found a group of high grade spell warriors that were looking for us."

In the resulting confusion, I was able to fortunately return as my pursuers were vastly slowed down by the spell warriors." After that was said, a hidden intensity appeared on his face.

His face was far more pale than Han Li had remembered and his eyes were listless. He must've suffered much damage to his vitality. Of course, the person by his side was the old white-robed Heavenpeak Sect Elder he had met earlier.

"Fellow Daoist Nanlong has earned my appreciation from being able to escape under those circumstances. But shouldn't Brother Nanlong be resting in his cave residence rather than urgently finding me? There was no hesitation either to send a disciple to bother my concubine. I am at somewhat of a loss." Han Li's smile faded away and there was faint annoyance in his tone.

"Hehe! Fellow Daoist misunderstands. I only did it because I had no choice. Fellow Daoist should know there are now people pursuing us. This secret plan was to escape their notice.

This is Fellow Daoist Jadepearl of the Heavenpeak Sect, a friend I would trust my life with. He was originally to come with us on the last treasure hunt, but it was a pity that he was occupied with sect matters at the time."

Marquis Nanlong's attitude towards Han Li had entirely changed from when he first saw him; it was no much more respectful. It seemed that he was deeply moved when he saw Han Li killing another Nascent Soul cultivator.

At that moment, the white-robed old man chuckled and saluted Han Li. He spoke with a regretful tone, "If my methods have offended you, I hope Fellow Daoist Han won't take it to heart. It was the only way."

Han Li waved his hand and said, "It's fine. Since there was a reason, I'll let it go. However, did Fellow Daoist Nanlong seek me out because or something from the jade box?"

Marquis Nanlong solemnly said, "Fellow Daoist guessed right. According to my sources, the Ghost Spirit Sect paid a heavy price to bribe our previous party members. They are determined to acquire Master Cang Kun's map and method to enter Devilfall

Valley. Fellow Daoist Han just happened to acquire one of the items needed to enter Devilfall Valley. When combined with my map, we will be able to avoid a majority of dangers in the valley, allowing use to acquire the treasure.”

Something soon came to Han Li’s mind, “An item essencial to entering Devilfall Valley? Do you mean the black ring?”

Marquis Nanlong grew excited and a bit of color returned to his complexion, “The Heaven-Earth Ring is true within Han Li’s possession. This is great.”

“The Heaven-Earth Ring?” Han Li frowned and felt the name to be somewhat familiar. He suddenly grew alarmed and looked towards Marquis Nanlong. He bewilderedly asked, “The Heaven-Earth Rings that Wise Huang refined from meteor iron? I heard that ordinary, the ring doesn’t possess great ability but when it came across Greatnorth Essence Light, it is able to control the essence light to kill others and become formless. It is considered a magic treasure of little interest.”

“Fellow Daoist is truly knowledgeable. It is precisely that item. The Heaven-Earth Rings are divided into Yin and Yang. The Yin rings are able to protect oneself from essence light while the Yang Rings are able to control the essence light to attack. Fellow Daoist Han should be in possession of the Yin ring.

Originally, Master Cang Kun drew assistance from the ring and managed to pass through the valley’s essence light area unscathed. To my knowledge, although there are other methods to pass through the Greatnorth Essence Light, but it would require an extensive formation placed down by many cultivators or treasures that are lost or incapable of being acquired.”

“Fellow Daoist means...” Han Li glanced at the two and began to ponder about the dangers and what there was to be gained.

# Chapter 727: Ancient Flame Toad

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Marquis Nanlong blinked and calmly said, “It’s very simple. Fellow Daoist Master Jadepearl, Fellow Daoist Han, and I will act as one and seize the treasure inside Devilfall Valley. Once we find the treasures, our strength will greatly increase, and there will be no need to fear from anyone.”

Han Li didn’t immediately respond. Rather, he narrowed his eyes at he stared the two. Having heard that the black ring were one of the Heaven-Earth Rings from legend, he immediately recalled the other ring that he had acquired from Nangong Wan’s Senior Martial Sister.

If his guess was correct, that should be the Yang ring of the Heaven-Earth Rings. He truly didn’t think that the two rings would be related to each other in this way. Han Li felt that the world was truly mysterious for such a coincidence to occur and couldn’t help but laugh in his mind.

He sighed and wore a hesitant expression, “From what you’ve said, Fellow Daoist Nanlong seems to already have a means to enter Devilfall Valley. With the assistance of the Heaven-Earth Ring, what are the chances of leaving alive and with treasure. Devilfall Valley is known to be the most dangerous place in the Heavenly South. It is no laughing matter, and I have no wish to meeting my death there and becoming feed for any passing animal.”

When they heard Han Li’s words, the two glanced at one another. A short moment later, Marquis Nanlong spoke with a deep voice, “Since Fellow Daoist Han asked, I don’t conceal this from you. According to what Master Cang Kun left behind, Devilfall Valley is still an extremely dangerous place. If one is not careful, they will be absorbed into a shifting spatial tear or find themselves in a remnant of an ancient restriction.

“To tell the truth, there will be no problem entering. We have a  
an almost certain chance of safely entering, but if it’s hard to say  
when we’re searching for treasure. The more dangerous the area,  
the higher likelihood of getting treasure. Even Master Cang Kun is  
unsure what we will find within these areas. Because Master Cang  
Kun suffered extensive damage to his cultivation at the time, he  
didn’t treat deep into the center of Devilfall Valley. He simply  
found a few treasures around the outer area. However, this also  
illustrates there are truly treasures within the valley that had been  
left behind from times of desolate antiquity. By braving these  
dangers, we will be certain to return with vast rewards.” At the  
end of his words, his voice seemed to carry a tone of temptation.

Master Jadepearl then said, “Of course, if Fellow Daoist is truly  
unwilling to brave the danger, you can simply give the ring to us.  
However, we’ll only be able to give you a few spirit stones. But I  
must say that the medicine pills of ancient cultivators are many  
and their effects are beyond imagination. If you acquire them, it  
will only be a matter of time before you breakthrough mid and late  
Nascent Soul stage. Perhaps you may even be able to find some lost  
secrets that have to do with Deity Transformation stage  
cultivators. After all, we have no idea what truly happens after  
they enter Deity Transformation stage as to whether they truly  
ascend to the spirit realm or whether they undergo some other  
transformation. Could it be that Fellow Daoist doesn’t wish to find  
the truth?”

Han Li’s eyes glinted and he muttered to himself for a moment  
before saying, “If I am not mistaken, you two wish for me to enter  
Devilfall Valley for some reason. After all, you have plenty of  
Nascent Soul allies, and have no need for me.”

Once that was said, their faces immediately froze before  
revealing a trace of embarrassment.

Marquis Nangong pursed his lips in a wry smile and chuckled.  
With a helpless tone, he said, “To tell the truth, I would’ve

mentioned this even if Fellow Daoist Han hadn't raised the point. Not only are there spatial tears and remnant restrictions, there are also a few ancient beasts that had remained since ancient times. Among them is the Ancient Flame Toad that have gone long extinct. Although this flame toad still hasn't become intelligent, it has lived for countless years, and has grown incredibly powerful with scales of otherworldly demonfire. According to what was left behind by Master Cang Kun, its demon flames are several times more intense than our own Nascent Flames. With the blue ice flames that you used to instantly freeze a Nascent Soul cultivator, you should be able to restrain the flame toad. “

Han Li blinted with surprise before revealing an odd expression, “Are you saying that the flame toad is blocking your route into the valley?”

Master Jadepearl calmly answered, “Not at all. Rather, the beast has something to do with an ancient cultivator's remain. While there are no restrictions or spatial tears nearby the body, the Ancient Flame Toad happened to place its nest nearby.

Master Cang Kun planned on acquiring the remains, but he quickly retreated after battling with the Flame Toad. However, he still suffered from its flame venom afterwards and nearly died as a result.”

Han Li chuckled and said, “I understand now. You two fellow Daoists wish for me to deal with the Ancient Flame Toad and allow you to seize the treasure.”

Marquis Nanlong excitedly added, “Dealing with the flame toad will be far more preferable than dealing with the ancient restrictions and the spatial teras. So long as we use an appropriate strategy, we should have no problems dealing with it given your ice flames. Not to mention that we don't even need Fellow Daoist to exterminate the beast, only to capture its attention while we acquire the treasure. Once we have the ancient cultivator's storage pouch, we can simply disengage.”

After a moment of thought, Han Li indifferently said, “According to what you’ve said, it’ll be safer to deal with the Ancient Flame Toad once we’ve enter rather than risk other areas of Devilfall Valley.”

Marquis Nanlong nodded his head, “If luck would have it, the treasures in the ancient cultivator’s storage pouch will be worth the danger.”

Han Li smirked and formed a mysterious smile, “Even if that’s the case, you should be able to draw from the power of the Heavenpeak Sect and act together. That should be much better than just us three acting alone. I don’t believe the Heavenpeak Sect can’t find other cultivators that have ice attribute techniques.”

Marquis Nanlong sighed and said, “It seems Fellow Daoist Han still doesn’t know the fearsomeness of the Greatnorth Essence Light. Even with the Heaven-Earth Ring, we’ll only be able to use its power to shelter three at most. It doesn’t have the strength for a fourth. As for the Heavenpeak Sect, I’m sure Fellow Daoist should know how difficult it will be for me to trust others after what had happened with the Ghost Spirit Sect.” At that moment Marquis Nanlong’s listless eyes suddenly revealed a cold glint.

When Han Li heard this, he simply smiled without revealing the slightest surprise, “It seems Brother Nanlong trusts me quite deeply. I am truly honored!”

Master Jadepearl took quick breath and stared at Han Li, asking, “Fellow Daoist Han, we’ve already handled our other affairs. Will you tell us your answer?”

Han Li skirted the question and asked, “Could it be that you plan on going to Devilfall Valley soon?”

Marquis Nanlong quickly answered, “No. Although the majority of spatial tears constantly change, every fifty years there comes a year where the spatial teras are comparatively calm. I particularly looked into it before we entered the Moulan Plains. This calm

period will become in about four years. During this time, we will have to make a few preparations.”

Han Li stroked his chin before eventually coming to a decision, “Since it is still a while away, I will have to deliberate carefully. How about I give you a reply a year before the period of calm for Devilfall Valley? Even if I can’t enter Devilfall Valley , I’ll still be able to give you the Heaven-Earth Ring to you.”

The two weren’t very satisfied with his answer, but Han Li wasn’t about to rashly agree to head into such a dangerous area.

After all, he was different from the two. He could tell from a glance that Marquis Nanlong and Master Jadepearl were far older than he was and were even nearing the end of their lifespans. They were willing to brave the danger as this was likely their last opportunity. On the other hand, Han Li was still young and was hesitant to face such dangers. After all, changes occur quickly in the world. He would still be able to come to a decision after seeing how things have changed.

Fortunately, Han Li had already agreed that he would give the Heaven-Earth Ring to them and the two hadn’t further pressed the issue. After chatting a bit more on matters related to Devilfall Valley, Han Li tactfully took his leave.

Before he left, Master Jadepearl gave Han Li a medallion. He said that so long as Han Li show the medallion to any Heavenpeak disciple, he would be able to contact Master Jadepearl through his disciple. Han Li took the item without any reservations and left the stone room. Once he reached back to the store on the ground level, he made way to the street under the shopkeeper’s respectful farewell.

Han Li was certain that not long after he left, the two would change locations, particularly due to Marquis Nanlong’s heavy wounds. He would surely be anxious to find a safe area to recover. However, it would be incredibly difficult for Marquis Nanlong to

completely recover after a sparse few years. It was quite possible that his injuries could cause his cultivation to fall an entire level.

Han Li inwardly shook his head and tossed the matter to the back of his mind before calmly heading back to his residence.

The matter of Devilfall Valley was still quite a distance away, but the invasion of the Moulan spell warriors was happening now. It wasn't something that he'd be able to avoid. Han Li began to consider this matter as he slowly disappeared from view.

# Chapter 728: Providing Assistance

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Once Han Li returned to his residence, he found Senior Martial Brother Lu and the Child Fire Dragon waiting for him in the hall of the first floor. Mu Peiling was currently sitting to the side just like one would expect of a hostess.

When she saw Han Li enter, she immediately stood up and said, “My Lord, Senior Lu and Senior Lan have been waiting for you for quite some time. Did something happen?”

Han Li gave Mu Peiling a rare smile and gently said, “It’s nothing. You can go up first and rest. I’ll be having a proper chat with my two Senior Martial Brothers.”

“Yes, My Lord.” Mu Peiling gave an charming curtsy and climbed up the stairs without another word. When Han Li glanced at her from behind, he felt satisfied at the woman’s intelligent response, but when he recalled the matter with Nangong Wan, he couldn’t help but sigh.

When Lu Luo saw that Han Li had returned in such an excited mood, he teased, “What? Does Junior Martial Brother Han finally have desire for children?”

Han Li smiled and sat down beside the two. He calmly said, “Hehe, Senior Martial Brother Jests. Since you two are here, it must be about the treaties meeting earlier today.”

Lu Luo slowly said, “Junior Martial Brother guessed correctly. It is about the Moulan Invasion. We’ve already delivered the news to the other sects in the alliance and the matter has spread to our fellow alliance members in the city. A majority of these Fellow Daoists are willing to send reinforcements in acknowledgement that the matter will not be solved by hiding. They are willing to assist the Nine Nations Union in resisting the Moulan Vanguard.

Of course, these Nascent Soul cultivators will require a sizable

amount of spirit stones as compensation. I'm sure the Nine Nations Alliance will be more than willing to pay. After all, the Moulan are a fearsome opponent, but it is true that the Nine Nations Union does bear the brunt of the invasion."

Han Li nodded his head and spoke with slight puzzlement, "Since that's the case, what is there to discuss? Although I've reached Nascent Soul stage for only a few years, I am still capable of fighting enemies."

The Child Fire Dragon then spoke with a solemn expression, "Fellow Daoist might not know that a group of Righteous and Devil Dao cultivators paid us a visit and spoke of a few matters. I feel that it is reasonable to tell you what they said."

Han Li blinked several times before wearing a mysterious smile, "What did they say? Don't tell me that they said the Nine Nations Union was using this as an opportunity to weaken the other three powers."

Lu Luo replied with a wry smile, "Junior Martial Brother Han is truly intelligent indeed to have guessed correctly after only a moment. However, the Nine Nations Union would find it difficult to deal with all three superpowers at once. It is quite possible that they will ally with one or two parties and take down another. This isn't something that our Heavenly Dao Alliance is willing to see happen —

The cultivation world will become unstable when the Moulan spell warriors retreat. Our alliance cannot allow this to happen and upset the balance of power."

Han Li smirked and calmly asked, "Oh? You mean..."

The Child Fire Dragon said, "It's quite simple. Although the three superpowers will listen to the Nine Nations Union for the time being, we will not allow them to weaken any of us. We had discussed this together with the Devilish and Righteous Dao, and we came to a conclusion to have further discussions on some rules

tomorrow in the official hall.

At the very least, the Nine Nations Union will be forced to send their own elders into battle alongside ours, instead of covertly weakening our Nascent Soul cultivators. We will require Junior Martial Brother Han along with the other cultivators to back this proposal.”

Han Li replied without further thought. “It is no problem. I also have no wish for cultivators to secretly plan behind my back while I fight spell warriors.”

Lu Luo sighed and said, “That is good. In addition to Junior Martial Brother Han, we will contact other Fellow Daoists and ensure that the Enlightened Leaf Sect and the Flowing Mind Sect will not be able to do this. I hope this war will end as soon as possible; else, the losses in the Heavenly South will be untold!”

The Child Fire Dragon wore a cold smile and ominously said, “Hehe! With our cultivation, so long as we are careful, we will be able to preserve our lives in the war. In the last Moulan invasion, I managed to slaughter a good number of spell warriors. This time, I will want to also slay a good number.”

Han Li glanced at the Child Fire Dragon with astonishment. This cultivator had the appearance of a boy, but his cultivation was at early Nascent Soul stage. The baleful Qi his body emitted was also far more heavy than his peers. It appeared many lives had been slayed by his hand.

The three chatted a bit more about the concrete details for tomorrow’s discussion and had a few brief words on the sudden appearance of the huge beasts and the strange spell warriors before they departed.

When Han Li saw the two to the residence’s entrance, Lu Luo hesitated for a moment before asking Han Li, “Junior Martial Brother, did anything happen from your meeting today with your old acquaintance?” At that moment, Lu Luo was staring at Han Li’s

face as if wishing to see if he would betray anything from his expression.

Han Li blinked and calmly answered, “Nothing happened. We merely discussed about the past.”

“That is good! I am relieved.” Lu Luo felt most of his worries disappear with his response and happily said a few more words with Han Li before leaving with the Child Fire Dragon.

Han Li stood in front of his residence and watched the two enter another building nearby, presumably to meet with another cultivator. It appeared that the two had been assigned a duty within the Heavenly Dao Alliance. Otherwise, the Devilish and Righteous Dao representatives wouldn’t have sought them out.

Han Li stoked his chin and pondered for a moment before going back inside.

...

The second day of discussions had nearly double the number of Nascent Soul cultivators. In addition to the elders of the three superpowers, there were also a few vagrant cultivators.

This sudden change had caught the hosts of the conference — the Flowing Mind Sect’s Lady Qi and the Enlightened Leaf Sect’s Kun Peng — off guard. They had been forced to agree to the many cultivator’s conditions regardless of what they had in mind previously. The most important of these conditions being that high grade assignments must be participated by an equal share of cultivators among the four powers, avoiding any machinations the other powers may have in store for another.

Han Li had been particularly surprised to see that the a coalition of Nascent Soul cultivators from the Heavenly Dao Union — after being informed by Lu Luo and the Child Fire Dragon — had already came to decision to a send Nascent Soul elders and Core Formation cultivators to support Soaring Heavens City.

Of course, since they were still quite a distance away, Lu Luo and the other cultivators already present would have to delay the Moulan invasion in the meantime.

And for the purposes of being fair, those that acquired vast merits in battle would be allowed to return to their sects once reinforcements arrived, and will not be required to participate in any later battles as the incoming cultivators would take their place.

Additionally, whether it be the Child Fire Dragon, Lu Luo, or any others, all the cultivators in the hall have each been assigned various duties to support the frontline.

Han Li and the other two Nascent Soul cultivators were leading a party of eight Core Formation cultivators to provide support to a strategic location on the border of the State of Yu. It was one of the tensome vital points along the border that would be a target of the Moulan Invasion. If these points remained uncaptured, the Moulan wouldn't be able to truly hold any land going forward for fear of attack.

As for the Nine Nations Union, their current strength wasn't enough to launch a decisive battle against the Moulan. They could only rely on favorable conditions and meticulously placed grand formations to gradually delay the spell warriors' main army. Else given the speed of the high grade spell warriors, they would've been able to reach Soaring Heavens City in only a month.

The army of the spell warriors have yet to reach the strategic location that Han Li was assigned to protect. However, there was only one Nine Nations Union Nascent Soul cultivator amongst the high grade cultivators that were guarding it. It appeared that in the past invasions, a single Nascent Soul cultivator was enough to contend against a number of spell warriors with the support of the restrictions and spell formations. However, this was nowhere near enough to top spell warrior's current attacks.

As for the other Nascent Soul cultivators, there was Old Man Ma

from the Righteous Dao's Grand Pavilion — a lean old man with a healthy appearance — and there was also the green-robed old man that he saw the other day in the discussion hall named Gu Shuangpu. Although he only had a single spirit beast pouch at its waist, Han Li felt uncomfortable from the Qi that it faintly emitted. It appeared that it was quite unordinary.

The two of them possessed similar cultivation to Han Li, at early Nascent Soul stage.

Because it was likely that the main army of the spell warriors would soon attack this location, the three Nascent Soul cultivators quickly decided to leave behind their Core Formation cultivators and hurried to reach the spell formation first, and have their Core Formation Juniors lag behind.

On the way, Old Man Ma had proven quite entertaining and spoke of humorous matters as if they were on a scenic journey rather than on their way to fight spell warriors.

As for the Controlling Spirit Sect's Gu Shuangpu, he kept silent for most of the journey and wore a sullen expression. It was unknown what he was thinking. As for Han Li, he wore a smile on his face and spoke with Old Man Ma, giving the two a refined impression. The two both knew that Han Li was a newly ascended Nascent Soul cultivator and they didn't hold Han Li's strength in much esteem.

# Chapter 729: Yellow Dragon Mountain

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Nearly half a month later, in the Yellow Dragon Mountains of the State of Yu's Li Prefecture, there was a large bald middle-aged man that stood inside a jade hall on top of the Yellow Dragon Mountains. He continuously walked in a circle with an apprehensive expression.

A short moment later, the large man sat down on a straw chair and took a sip of tea from the cup on the table, calming his roiling heart for a time. But then a red streak of light suddenly flew inside and began to circle around the hall. The large man's expression changed upon seeing this and he beckoned to the red light, having it fall into his hand.

The light burst into raging flames upon touching his hand and the large man sunk his spiritual sense within them. His expression immediately turned unsightly. Silence filled the hall for a time and his expression grew ashen. Then, he silently took out a small azure bell from his storage pouch and struck it with his finger.

A melodious ring filled the entire hall, with unceasing echos returning from a distance.

Soon, the ring spread to the entirety of the Yellow Dragon Mountains, and the jade buildings on top of the other peaks began to flourish with lights of every color. Then cultivators wearing various clothing hurriedly flew out from these buildings as if practiced. Not long after, a dense green mist began to spread throughout the entire Yellow Dragon Mountain, turning an area of tens of kilometers into a sea of strange dark-green mist.

Soon after, four cultivators appeared before the large bald man from within the hall, three men and one woman — all possessing Core Formation cultivation. There were two men that appeared thirty years of age, appearing similar enough to be siblings. The other man was wearing Daoist robes, wielded a horsetail whisk,

and despite his gallant appearance he was middle-aged. As for the sole female cultivator, her figure was dainty and her face was exceptionally beautiful.

The four were each standing next to one another in the hall with grave expressions.

With an expression of disbelief, the female cultivator hesitantly asked, “Senior Lu[1], is it true that a spell warrior army has arrived so quickly. From what we heard last time, wasn’t it only supposed to be a squadron of spell warriors? And what happened to Senior Bu? Could it be that in a mere week the Heavenwind Storm Formation was destroyed even under the guard of Senior Bu? Is this not a misunderstanding?”

[1] This Lu 陸 is different from the past two ‘Lu’s (Master Jadepearl[魯 Lu Weiying]), 呂(Lu Luo)’ that have been encountered. They’re homophones.

The bald man coldly smiled and grimly said, “Misunderstanding? I would think that also were it not for the fact that Hunchback Bu had personally sent me the message. He even mentioned that he sustained heavy injuries and was about to soon arrive at our Yellow Dragon Mountains along with a few of his defeated garrison. This is by no means a misunderstanding. We will have to face the enemy alone without any reinforcements.”

When the four Core Formation cultivators heard this, they could only glance at one another with a bitter smile and acknowledge him.

Following that, the large man gave each of the four their orders in preparation for the oncoming battle, but suddenly yet another streak of red light flew into the building. The cultivators in the room were stunned by the sudden appearance.

The large man grew still and reached for the sound transmission talisman without any hesitation. As a result, the talisman bursted into flame and clearly transmitted its message to him, causing him

to wear an odd expression.

The female cultivator couldn't help but ask, "Senior Lu, what's the matter? Spell warriors have already arrived?" When the other three Core Formation cultivators heard this, their expressions all grew tense.

The large man grinned. Suppressing the excitement in his heart, he slowly said, "No, our reinforcements have arrived. Three Nascent Soul Fellow Daoists have arrived outside the grand formation. Quickly, head out to welcome them and invite them inside."

Immediately, the four Core Formation cultivators revealed delight and promptly accepted the large man's orders with a salute.

Three silhouettes were floating outside above the green mist and were examining the restrictions of the grand formation down below. The three, of course, were Han Li and the other two Nascent Soul cultivator that had hurried on their way.

Because the three would soon be relying on the grand formation to resist a siege from the Moulan armies, they each examined the sea of mist surrounding the mountains as they waited for the cultivators inside to respond, wishing to see the mysteries that it hid.

Let alone whatever the true power of the spell formation may be, the green sea it produced seemed nearly limitless at a glance and emitted an unordinary pressure. With his hands behind his back, a blue light suddenly appeared in Han Li's eyes as he glanced at the formation, resulting in a pensive expression on his face.

Not long after, a series of white flashes appeared from the green mist, and the mist rolled away to create a passage through.

Old Man Ma and Gu Shuangpu seemed to pay this change no notice. One of them was looking at the sky in silence while the

other was staring at another portion of the green mist as if he found something odd about it. Han Li was the only one that calmly glanced at the passageway with a faint smile on his face.

A short moment later, four streaks of light shot out from the passageway, revealing themselves to be the four Core Formation cultivators from before.

The gallant middle-aged cultivator in Daoist robes respectfully saluted the three, “Juniors pay their respects to these Seniors. May we know of your venerable names?”

When Han Li saw that the two had no intention of speaking, Han Li smiled and took the initiative to introduce themselves, “I am the Drifting Cloud Sect Elder Han Li. These two are Fellow Daoist Ma of the Grand Pavilion and Fellow Daoist Gu of the Controlling Spirit Sect. There are still another eight Core formation cultivators on their way. Us three left them behind in fear that we would be too late. And since the grand formation is currently activated, the Moulan must soon be arriving!”

The gallant middle-aged cultivator then gave an introduction to the three cultivators standing behind them, “So it turned out to be Senior Han. I am the Clear Void Sect’s Chong Xuzi. These two are Yellow Maple Valley’s Murong Brothers and this is the Saber Transformation Dock’s Lady Li.”

‘The Murong Brothers?’ Han Li’s gaze flickered across the brothers and he wore a mysterious smile on his face, “Is Fellow Daoist Nie still doing well?”

The Murong Brothers revealed delight upon hearing this, “Senior recognizes Senior Martial Sister Nie? We haven’t seen her for several years because we’ve been stationed at this grand formation.”

Han Li glanced at the two brothers and pursed his lips into a beaming smile, “Of course I do. I saw your Senior Martial Sister not too long ago. But it seems you two don’t recognize me. This

comes as no surprise as I was but a passing face to you two.”

The two were greatly alarmed upon hearing Han Li and immediately stiffened. This Senior seemed to be an old acquaintance, but why was it they had no impression of him? They took another careful look of Han Li before eventually finding him to feel somewhat familiar. The two then bewilderedly glanced at each other.

“Hehe! Since you Fellow Daoists don’t recognize me, I’ll leave the matter for later,” Han Li then glanced at Old Man Ma and Gu Shuangpu from a side and indifferently said, “Can we now go inside?”

Chong Xuzi felt somewhat baffled by the previous scene, but he roused upon hearing Han Li and hastily agreed, “Of course. Seniors, please follow me. Senior Lu is eagerly waiting for you in the main hall.”

Afterwards, the four Core formation cultivators led the way as they flew through the green mist. Not long after, the passageway within the roiling green mist quickly closed once more.

A short moment later, Han Li and the others appeared within the hall before the large bald man.

When the bald man saw the three, his stern expression was replaced with a smile, “I welcome you three for supporting our defenses. Aren’t you Brother Ma and Fellow Daoist Gu? As for this young Fellow Daoist, who might you name be?” Upon seeing Han Li, the large man felt him to unfamiliar and he curiously examined him.

Old Man Ma chuckled and said, “It is no surprise that Brother Lu doesn’t recognize him. Fellow Daoist Han just condensed his Nascent Soul a few years ago. His future prospects are limitless.”

A trace of disappointment momentarily appeared on the large man’s face when he heard that Han Li was a newly ascended

Nascent Soul cultivator, but he soon wore a grateful expression, “Oh? So it turned out to be a newly ascended Fellow Daoist. It is no wonder why I’ve never seen you before! But regardless of how it is said, I am most grateful for your support. I fear that we would’ve fallen in merely days had you not arrived.”

The bald man’s momentary lapse hadn’t escaped Han Li’s notice. However, he simply smiled in silence and didn’t betray the slightest discontent.

The bald man then spoke of a few past matters before moving onto the difficult situation that was currently facing them.

# Chapter 730: Reappearance of Yingning

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Skipping further pleasantries, the large bald man bluntly said, “You three Fellow Daoists arrived just in time. I just received information that an army of spell warriors attacked Fellow Daoist Bu’s Sky Terrace Valley and are coming here in passing. In less than half a day, our defeated allies from Sky Terrace Valley will arrive. I hope when the time comes, you three Fellow Daoists will be able to rescue them.”

Showing not the slightest dissatisfaction at the request, Old Man Ma said, “This will be handled; it is but a trivial affair. I’ll be able to do it myself, so there’s no need for Fellow Daoist Han and Brother Gu to act!”

This caused Han Li and Gu Shuangpu to glance at each other with slight surprise.

The old man twirled his beard and wore a mysterious expression. “Fellow Daoists, don’t be surprised. It isn’t that I wish to show off, but there is a recently acquired treasure that I wish to test. Surely you won’t fight me on this?”

Gu Shuangpu chuckled and indifferently said, “Hehe! Fellow Daoist Ma must feel confident. I’ll definitely leave it to you.

“That’s good. Let’s have Fellow Daoist and Brother Gu take a rest first and leave it to Fellow Daoist Ma. However, I’ll have the Murong Brothers accompany Fellow Daoist Ma on the trip. The two have cultivated the Lightning Bind spell technique. It should prove quite powerful.”

The old man had no intention of opposing him. After all, having allied accompaniment in an unfamiliar area was proper conduct.

Afterwards, Old Man Ma and the Murong Brothers immediately set off to receive the defeated Nine Nation cultivators. As for Han Li and Gu Shuangpu. They were led inside the hall by the

remaining two Core Formation cultivators and were given a place to rest for the time being.

Along the way, Han Li and the old man separated, and Han Li was led to a small serene building by the young woman.

The dainty woman pointed to the building and stood to the side as she spoke, “Senior Han, this place is normally strictly prohibited from low-grade disciples. It should be an optimal place to meditate. Senior may rest here.”

“It is quite good.” Han Li nodded with a trace of satisfaction on his face.

The woman didn’t immediately depart. Instead, she hesitated and asked, “Senior, is Fellow Daoist Nie Yin doing well? I haven’t seen Senior Martial Sister in a long time.”

With some surprise, Han Li shot the young woman an appraising look and calmly asked, “What, are you familiar with Young Lady Nie?”

At that moment, Han Li discovered that although the woman felt somewhat familiar despite being the first time he had ever seen her, he unconsciously developed a good impression of her. As Han Li gazed at the woman, she began to feel slightly apprehensive and upset, and her complexion turned scarlet.

“I was able to enter the Saber Transformation Dock in much thanks to Senior Martial Sister Nie’s recommendation,” the dainty woman explained with a lowered her head. “How could I be not be close with her?”

“Yingning? Li Yingning?” When Han Li heard this, he couldn’t help but reveal an astonished expression.

Li Yingning unconsciously raised her head and astonished asked, “Has Senior heard my name before?”

Han Li didn’t answer the woman and simply took a deep breath before asking, “What was your mother’s name? What country did

she come from?"

The woman hesitated for a long while, debating inwardly whether or not the information should be hidden. Something then came to her mind and replied, "My mother's name was Mo Yuzhu. She came from the State of Yue. Why does Senior ask this?"

After a moment of silence, he said, "Do you still have the Passing Spirit Jade pendant?"

"I do have it. I've kept it close at hand ever since I was small." After she replied, she blushed underneath his stare and turned around.

She fumbled within her robes for a moment and turned around with a white jade pendant in her hand. Han Li beckoned to it as soon as he saw it and had the jade pendant fly into his hand. Once he rubbed the smooth surface of the jade pendant, Han Li let out a long sigh and wore a listless expression.

"You should realize who I am now," he said after a long while. "What did your mother say of me?"

He examined the woman once more and eventually found a trace of Mo Yuzhu's resemblance after knowing what to search for. Although her beauty was somewhat less than her mother in her prime, he could still find a similar trace of country-shaking beauty.

With a wavering expression, Li Yingzhu muttered, "In the past, Mother didn't speak much of you. I only heard that she had a close friend who gave me a congratulations present at the time, a cultivator. After I entered the cultivation world, I attempted to find the gifter of this jade pendant several times, but I found no information. I didn't expect that Senior gave it to her. After all, Senior is a Drifting Cloud Sect cultivator."

Han Li stroked his nose and wryly smiled. "I only recently entered the Drifting Cloud Sect several years ago. In the past, I was no longer able to remain in the State of Yue, so it is no surprise

that you've heard nothing of me. How was it you were able to enter the Saber Transformation Dock? It is reasonable to say that it would come to no surprise if you joined the Controlling Spirit Sect."

Li Yinzhu blinked in astonishment and asked, "Why would that come as no surprise if I were a disciple of the Controlling Spirit Sect?"

With a tone of surprise, Han Li asked in turn, "You didn't know about your father's affairs?"

The woman's expression grew dim and she forced a smile. "I know little of my father. From my earliest memory, my grandfather and my father died from unknown causes, and I lived alone with my mother. She brought me away from the State of Yue and we wandered for a long time before finally arriving within the territories of the Nine Nations Union."

Han Li nodded his head as if he had suddenly realized something. "So it was like that! It seems that your father and mother were caught in the crossfire of the Devil Dao's inner struggle. After all, the Ghost Spirit Sect were the ones who had ended up controlling the State of Yue, not the Controlling Spirit Sect."

"An internal struggle amongst the Devil Dao?" The woman seemed confused by what Han Li had said.

Han Li didn't further elaborate upon seeing this and instead returned the jade pendant to the woman and smiled. "This Passing Spirit Jade has followed you throughout many years, so naturally I won't be taking it from you. Before I entered the world of Immortal cultivation, I was your mother's senior martial brother of sorts. You may call me Martial Senior Han in the future."

Still puzzled, the woman blinked several times with large eyes, but she still softly shouted, "Martial Senior Han!" Although she felt slightly embarrassed, she was more than willing to accept having another Nascent Soul Senior. She was even secretly

delighted over it.

Han Li wore a friendly smile on his face and he summoned two jade bottles with a flip of his hand. “Since you’ve called me Martial Senior, I can’t ignore it. Here are two medicine bottles. They are quite useful for breaking through bottlenecks at Core Formation stage.” In his point of view, if he could assist the descendant of an old friend, he wasn’t going to be petty about it.

“Many thanks, Martial Senior.” The woman accepted the medicine pill and revealed an expression of pleasant surprise. Her voice sounded both crisp and sincere.

“What sort of magic treasure do you use?” Han Li asked after a moment of thought. “Could it be the flying saber that you were flying on?”

Li Yingning paused for a moment and replied with a puzzled tone, “That’s right, it’s that magic treasure. The flying saber was refined from Intense Flame Iron and Profound Blossom Crystal. Its power is quite good.”

Han Li shook his head and said, “Were this ordinary times, the flying saber would be sufficient. But now that you must contend against spell warriors, I fear it would be quite dangerous to rely on that magic treasure alone.”

Li Yingning helplessly said, “However, if Martial Senior were to give me another magic treasure now, I wouldn’t have the time to refine it.”

When Han Li heard this, he muttered to himself with a pensive expression. A short moment later, he slapped the spirit beast pouch at his waist and a large swarm of black-tainted Gold Devouring Beetles flocked around him, forming a three-meter-wide insect cloud above him.

A bright glint flickered in Han Li’s eyes and he pointed to the insect swarm. A small portion of the insect swarm separated off

and were struck by an azure spell seal. The cloud of Gold Devouring Beetles then gathered together in a flash of azure light and instantly transformed in a sparkling, fist-sized ball of black, silver, and gold.

Once the ball slowly fell into Han Li's hand, Han Li tossed the ball to the woman and he solemnly said, "Place this item well. I meticulously transformed these insects. When you encounter an enemy that is difficult to deal with, throw the ball. It will save your life."

Li Yingzhu was stunned by the sight and was awakened by Han Li's words. She immediately accepted the ball and repeated uttered her thanks, "Many thanks for Martial Senior Han's deep kindness!"

The last doubts regarding Han Li in this woman's heart had finally disappeared. At this moment, she completely trusted Han Li. Why else would he give her such valuable gifts without having a previous relation?

"Alright, you may leave now. I wish to rest." After that was said, Han Li took back the remaining insect cloud and waved his hand.

The hurried rush to this strategic location had drained much of his magic power and he needed to restore it.

Using a faintly intimate tone, Li Yingning said, "Martial Senior Han, have a proper rest. If the spell warrior army arrives, I will come and inform you."

# Chapter 731: Purple Apex Flames

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Han Li sat cross legged in the meditation room on the building's second floor. His eyes were tightly shut and azure light flowed from his body. With hands forming a strange incantation gesture, an egg-sized ball of purple flame floated from his palm — gently wavering without end.

This devil flame was something that Han Li created from the Celestial Ice Flames and the Six-Winged Frost Centipede's glacial Qi. This flame's power was an entire stage higher than that of the Celestial Ice Flames, causing it to become Han Li's greatest killing move at the moment.

This purple devilflame was something that Han Li gradually created after he refined a sliver of the Celestial Ice Flames. And in order to differentiate it from the Sacred Asura Flames, he named it the Purple Apex Flames.

He was convinced that if this flame caught onto the body of even a late Nascent Soul cultivator, they definitely wouldn't be able to resist it. As for whether or not it could actually kill them, there was no way of guessing.

However, it was pity that although the flame's true might was inconceivable, it was limited on the quantity of Celestial Ice Flames he could refine. If he somewhat managed to gather together several times his current amount, he may find himself capable of openly contending against late Nascent Soul cultivators.

Han Li heard Silvermoon click her tongue in astonishment from the back of his mind, "Congratulations Master! I seemed to have underestimated the Purple Apex Flames. They appear quite a bit more powerful, and there will be even greater potential in the future."

He silently smiled in response and simply took a breathe, turning the Purple Apex Flames into a strand of flame and breathing it

inside him. He then released the incantation gesture he was holding and ceased his casting.

Han Li opened his eyes and slowly said, “Although the Purple Apex Flames were potent, the quantity is just far too little to be reliably used. What I am hoping for the most is that I will be able to open the Heavenvoid Cauldron. If what you said about it being a divine spirit treasure was true, I’ll be able to sweep across the entire Heavenly South with it in hand, and reach a realm of power where I will have no worries.”

Silvermoon sweetly chuckled and confidently said, “Please don’t worry, Master. The Heavenvoid Cauldron is as powerful or even greater than what I’ve said.”

Han Li nodded his head and thought to say something else when a streak of white light suddenly flew inside his room. Yingning’s clear voice suddenly echoed through the air, “Martial Senior Han, quickly hurry to the main hall! Senior Ma has returned and the Moulan are about to arrive!” Once that was said, the streak of white light flew back outside.

With a sullen expression on his face, a cold glint shined through his eyes as he flew out.

When Han Li arrived inside the main hall, Gu Shuangpu, Old Man Ma, and the large bald man were already present, along with a hunchbacked embroidered-robed cultivator with a pale complexion. He was currently walking with the others. As for the Core Formation cultivators, there were two unfamiliar additions to the four from before. They were currently standing by at the side with solemn expressions.

But when Yingning saw Han Li enter, she sweetly smiled at him.

The large bald man forced a smile and spoke with feigned ease, “Fellow Daoist Han has arrived. Let me give introductions. This is Fellow Daoist Bu Yunhe, the one who was in charge of Sky Terrace Valley. Fellow Daoist Bu, this is Fellow Daoist Han of the Drifting

Cloud Sect.”

When Han Li saw this, his mood sank. It seemed the situation was worse than he had imagined!

Wearing a kind expression, Han Li politely said, “I have long heard of Fellow Daoist Bu’s grand reputation from Brother Lu. I admire you for being able to safely escape.”

Already informed of Han Li by the others, the cultivator surnamed Bu didn’t reveal any surprise by his appearance. Rather, Bu Yunhe bitterly smiled and said, “I’ve made a sorry display of myself and have earned Fellow Daoist Han’s mockery. It was only thanks to Fellow Daoist Ma’s assistance that I was able to escape danger.” He then turned towards Old Man Ma with a grateful expression.

The old man chuckled, “It was nothing but a slight effort. However, those pursuers took the initiative to retreat before I even had the chance to test my ancient treasure. It was quite disappointing!”

With trepidation on his face, Bu Yunhe said, “Fellow Daoist’s ancient treasure possesses truly astonishing might. The pursuing spell warriors naturally didn’t wish to encounter you as they felt uncertain of their victory. But it must be said that the current Moulan invasion is far different from the ones in the past. Not only do the spell warriors have far better training, they are supported by ancient, ferocious beasts. These beasts are incredibly huge, with dense rough flesh clad in battle armor. There are also many strange restrictions that are placed on their bodies. When these creatures charge into any grand formations, the grand formation’s destruction will only be a matter of time.”

A strange expression appeared on Han Li’s face, “Don’t tell me that several Nascent Soul cultivators wouldn’t be able to slay this beast together?” Although he already knew the spell warrior armies brought along huge beasts, he had no idea they would be as

unfathomably formidable as this.

After a moment of thought, Bu Yunhe's expression relaxed, "With the full might of a strike from my magic treasure, I was able to wound a beast. However, I was jointly attacked by two high grade spell warriors, and was too occupied to slay the beast before it destroyed the grand formation. Fellow Daoist Lu should be able to easily hold this formation with reinforcements from Fellow Daoist Ma and the others. It shouldn't fall as easily as Sky Terrace Valley."

Gu Shuangpu gloomily said, "Fellow Daoist Bu, how many sage level spell warriors are there in this army? If there are few, our force of five Nascent Soul warriors should be able to catch them unprepared. Even if we can't slay one or two of their Nascent Soul grade spell warriors, we should be able to gravely injure them."

Bu Yunhe sighed and said, "I'm afraid I must disappoint Brother Gu. I spotted one of the strange spell warriors that had been earlier described together with two of the sage level spell warriors. While that strange spell warrior didn't attack, his body carried an extremely strange aura, perhaps due to some transformation. Moreover, I suspect there were more high grade spell warriors hidden amongst their army."

The large bald man nodded, "So it seems that we still have much to ponder if they're hiding their strength. If they are too powerful, we will have to drag them into the grand formation. In any case, our main objective is only to stall for time."

Gu Shuangpu frowned, appearing dissatisfied with this decision, but he didn't press the issue. Neither Han Li or Old Man Ma raised any objections as well.

As a result, the large bald man had Chong Xuzi lead Bu Yunhe to a meditation room to recover, and had Yingning and the others make arrangements for the routed Sky Terrace Valley cultivators as well added them to the garrison.

The large man's thorough arrangements were much to Han Li's approval. The Nine Nations Union had sent this man to guard this location for a reason.

At that moment, the rumbling sounds of a drum could be heard from a distance. Additionally, the sounds began to echo like rolls of thunder. Those in the hall grimaced at its appearance.

Suddenly, a layer of frost seemed to exude from Old Man Ma's face. With killing intent contained in his voice, he said, "It seems the Moulan have arrived. They were only a step behind us."

The large bald man cupped his fist to Han Li and the other two Nascent Soul cultivators, "That's fine. Let us test them first and see if the army of spell warriors have any formidable characters to speak of. For now, I'll have to trouble you three Fellow Daoists." He then turned his head to the two Core Formation cultivators that had arrived with Bu Yunhe, "You two, come and follow us out. As you've already fought them before, you should know of a few sinister tricks up their sleeve, and be able to give us a warning."

One of the Core Formation cultivators had thick eyebrows and tan skin; the other had a gloomy, horse-shaped face. When they heard the large bald man, they both glanced at each other before promptly saluting him and acknowledging his orders.

Han Li then turned his head in the direction of the beating drums and expressionlessly gazed into the distance.

To the south of the Yellow Dragon Mountains, a large number of Moulan spell warriors made their approach. They densely filled the horizon with dots in an orderly arrangement as they flew above the green mist down below them.

At the very front of the spell warrior army, there were over a dozen people standing side to side. With various spirit lights and treasure auras flickering from their bodies. They were the high grade spell warriors of the Moulan army. Among them, there were

three that were particularly eye-catching: a man enveloped in red light with a thick, malevolent flame snake twisting all over his body; a shriveled man as tall as a bamboo pole, appearing as if the very wind could throw him to the ground; and a figure enveloped in black robes. This black-robed figure had covered their face, but a black demonic Qi exuded from their body along with the faint sounds of ghostly wails. This was enough to inspire fear from those around them. Despite this, there were two others that were escorting the black-robed figure. However, the black-robed spell warrior flew alone at the very front of the army as if he didn't belong to it.

The other spell warriors turned their eyes away from the black-robed figure as if possessing both fear and awe of him. However, if one were to closely examine them, they could also see a trace of hatred as well.

# Chapter 732: Fire Spirit Flood Dragon

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The two high grade spell warriors at the black figure's side whispered something as if discussing how to destroy the grand formation ahead of them. Once the two finished their discussion, the oddly tall, shriveled cultivator blurred out of sight and reappeared at the side of the black-robed figure while wrapped in azure light.

"Sir Heavenweep, shall we start? The grand formation here should prove to be more powerful than the last. I've also heard that there should be a few Nascent Soul cultivators there. I fear that it will take quite some time."

"There is no need for us to attack first." The black-robed spell warrior shook his head. "They have already decided to emerge. Let's first see how powerful these cultivators are before we decide what to do." He spoke hoarsely and unclear almost as if he didn't have a tongue, much to the unease of those who heard him.

When the lanky spell warrior heard this, he blinked in surprise and glanced down towards the green mist. As expected, a previously still area of the green mist suddenly began to roil and split into two with flickers of light that could be seen from within.

Soon after, seven streaks of light shot out from within. They circled once around in the sky before revealing themselves — they were the party of five Nascent Soul stage and two Core Formation stage cultivators.

Under the bald man's command, there would be no low grade cultivators following them with the exception of the Core Formation cultivators from Sky Terrace Valley and Chong Xuzi.

Han Li stopped in the air and glanced across the army of spell warriors. Of course, the ten spell warriors leading them had attracted his attention, particularly the sinister black-robed figure. He wasn't able to stare for long as he unconsciously averted his

gaze.

When he saw this black-robed figure, he was immediately reminded of the Bone Sage, Xiao Cha.

‘Could it be this person was also a ghost Dao cultivator?’ Han Li’s heart trembled and he grew vastly more diligent.

Before the Bone Sage seized Crooked Soul’s body, his material form was dense with Yin and ghostly Qi. However, there was something slightly different with the black-robed figure’s aura that Han Li couldn’t describe for the time being.

As Han Li and company arrived, the spell warriors above began to stir. The spell warrior with the python wrapped around him suddenly transformed into a huge ball of light as it shot down towards the cultivators. When Han Li and company saw this, they coldly watched in silence, revealing not a single trace of panic.

So long as that spell warrior wasn’t seeking his own death, he wouldn’t dare to take the initiative to attack alone. As a result, the group of cultivators simply watched with hostile gazes as the huge fireball arrived twenty meters away from them. The flames emitted a scorching heat even from a distance, to the alarm of the many cultivators before them.

A silhouette leaked through the flames, followed by a thunderous voice that shook the very air nearby, “I am the Fire Rite Tribe’s Great Sage Ku Yao. Since you’ve arrived, you must be planning to first test our skills. How do you intend to have a competition? One on one? Or a melee?”

The bald man glared at the fireball and icily replied, “One on one. May the Heavens decide who survives.”

Ku Yao wildly laughed from within the fireball, “Good, that’s just what I wanted. I will be the first of your opponents. Prepare someone to come forward.”

The cultivators were furious by this, but Old Man Ma was

particularly sullen. With an expression filled with killing intent, his body transformed into a streak of white light and he flew forward. The bald man hesitated for a moment, but he didn't stop the old man and silently allowed him to be the first to battle.

From his point of view, he had no idea who amongst them possessed the greatest strength. Of course, he hadn't considered Han Li, who had just recently entered Nascent Soul stage.

When Ku Yao saw the streak of white light fly forward, he silently flew back and Old Man Ma followed until they were at the center between the spell warrior army and the green mist. In this manner, both of them would be able to act without any need to hold back or fear of a sudden ambush from either side.

The bald man turned to look at the horse-faced cultivator and solemnly asked, “What are the abilities of this Moulan Sage? Does he have any particular techniques?”

A trace of resentment appeared on his face as he answered, “His fire attribute techniques are incredibly powerful. The flame python on his body is particularly nimble as well — it is difficult to defend against. A fellow Core Formation guard of Sky Terrace Valley had been turned to ashes by that python after being caught.”

“Oh, it was like that!” The bald man then turned to the side and doubtfully said, “Brother Gu, if I remember correctly, the Grand Pavilion’s Grand Righteousness Arts is impervious to heat and flame, not to mention ghosts and wickedness. He should have an advantage against this spell warrior.”

With a hesitant expression in his eyes, Gu Shuangpu slowly said, “It’s hard to say. If they’re common fire attribute techniques, the Grand Righteousness Arts would be able to deal with them without a problem. But if it’s against a spell warrior’s techniques that display the three essences of worldly spirit flames, I fear it would be beyond the scope of the Grand Righteousness Arts.

Regardless, Fellow Daoist Ma is still the most suitable among us to fight this person. Even if his Grand Righteous Arts are unable to suppress the flames, they should be able to withstand the devilish influence of the flames. There won't be any worry of inner demon backlash."

When the bald man heard this, he felt his thoughts were certain and he relaxed for a moment before breathing out a long sigh.

Han Li glanced at the fire python that laid within the huge fireball and he felt his heart stir. With blue light flickering from his eyes, an odd expression was momentarily betrayed from his face.

At that moment, Old Man Ma held his hands together in an incantation gesture and a layer of soft white light began to glow from his body. At that same moment, he opened his mouth and spat out a silver speck of light the size of a walnut. In a large gust of wind, the silver light transformed into a ruler. It trembled for a moment before flickering with a thousand silver lights and releasing a cry similar to the holiest phoenix of the highest heavens.

Rather than act, Ku Yao remained still and indifferently glanced at the old man with folded arms with a sneer on his face. This display had inspired fury in Old Man Ma, and he coldly snorted before deciding to take the initiative to attack.

At that moment, he suddenly heard a faint voice transmission in his ear, so faint it was nearly inaudible but clear nonetheless. Old Man Ma was alarmed by what he heard, and he bewilderedly glanced around before his gaze fell onto Han Li.

Han Li gently smiled at the old man in response. With both amazement and doubt in mind, he turned his gaze back to Ku Yao and his expression sank.

Old Man Ma's gaze flickered several times and he sullenly said, "That fire python of yours isn't an ordinary spirit beast!"

Ku Yao paused for a moment before sneering, “Oh? So you have some judgement after all. My fire python is formed from a worldly fire spirit. It isn’t comparable to a spirit beast in the slightest.”

His body trembled for a moment and the fire python on his body brightly shined with red light before taking to the skies. A horn suddenly emerged from the python’s head and fierce claws grew from its body, revealing its form to be a fire flood dragon with sparkling red scales. It roiled in a fierce display as it flew above Ku Yao’s head.

“Transformed fire spirit!” The bald man couldn’t help but shout from his alarm. As for Gu Shuangpu, his expression grew unsightly.

Old Man Ma felt his heart drop. His opponent’s flame techniques had reached a stage where he could refine and transform fire spirits. This wasn’t something an ordinary Nascent Soul stage spell warrior was capable of. There was going to be a fierce battle ahead of him.

With that thought, Old Man Ma erased his original plan of only using seventy percent of his strength to fight the enemy. He took a deep breath and widely swept his sleeve, summoning an item that was wrapped in a rainbow glow. It circled once around his head and stopped a meter above it.

At that moment, the cultivators below and the spell warriors in the distance both watched with curiosity. A treasure that was able to flicker with rainbow light was likely something of exceptional quality.

Han Li also glanced at this item. The item was round and slim, a meter-long faintly yellow scroll. The scroll faced Ku Yao and slowly unrolled itself as Old Man Ma began to gravely chant a incantation. As a result, the scroll revealed a drawing of an ordinary eight trigram diagram.

Old Man Ma then struck the scroll with a seemingly basic spell

seal and had the scroll shine brightly, suddenly releasing astonishing fluctuations from the diagram.

When Ku Yao saw these fluctuations, he knew things were far from good and immediately pointed at the old man. The fire flood dragon floating above his head suddenly opened its mouth and spouted an unending stream of scarlet flames, instantly engulfing Old Man Ma and the eight trigram diagram in a sea of flames.

# Chapter 733: Supreme Eight Trigrams Diagram

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The bald man and the others wore an anxious expression when they saw the Old Man Ma enveloped in flames. However, they all secretly knew that Old Man Ma had taken out the scroll for a reason.

Sure enough, Old Man Ma was standing safely within the sea of flames. His hands were formed in an incantation gesture and the scroll was rolled out in front of him. Then in pulsing white light and roaring gales, a pillar of white wind emerged from the scroll, surging around an area over thirty meters around him. The sea of flames surrounding him had been mostly swept away with ease. Then with a furious howl from Old Man Ma, a streak of silver light shot out from the pillar of wind, directly striking at Ku Yao without any concern for the flood dragon floating above him.

It seemed that Old Man Ma clearly understood that so long as he could injure Ku Yao, the spirit-connected fire flood dragon would greatly decrease in might.

Curling the corner of his mouth, Ku Yao waved his arm, releasing a translucent flying saber that shined with brilliant, scarlet light from his palm. The saber instantly moved to block the silver streak and collided with it in midair, resulting in an equal clash as red and silver light intertwined.

When Ku Yao saw this, a cold glint appeared in his eye. With a flip of his hands, he summoned two red inch-large flags into his grasp before tossing them into the air. In a burst of wind, they instantly grew to three meters tall.

Following a cryptic incantation from Ku Yao, red light suddenly glowed from the flags and two thick columns of flame erupted, converging onto the fire flood dragon's horn — giving rise to a large cloud of weak flames nearby.

“Go!” Ku Yao ceased his incantation and puffed a mist of red Qi onto the fire flood dragon above him. With roused spirits, the flood dragon roared with delight before charging into the fire cloud, turning it crimson and causing it to boil. But soon, it began to rapidly shrink.

Down below, Han Li narrowed his eyes at the sight of this with pupils glowing blue. Through the Brightsight Spirit Eyes, he was able to astonishedly discover that the fire dragon hiding inside the cloud was breathing in the fire cloud with reckless abandon.

In the blink of an eye, the fire cloud was cleanly devoured and the flood dragon rapidly increased in size, raising to over thirty meters in height. With its head the size of a small building and its bared fangs, it appeared truly malevolent.

At that moment, the surging white pillar of wind had entirely blown away the sea of flames, revealing only Old Man Ma who stood inside it.

As he held the eight trigram scroll in his hands, he coldly watched the tremendous flood dragon for only a moment before wordlessly flinging the scroll into the air. The scroll then shot into the sky in a streak of rainbow light and promptly disappeared into the skies above, as if attempting to reach its farthest reaches.

Ku Yao blinked in astonishment. In his hesitation, he suddenly sensed a series of odd spiritual Qi fluctuations from above him. Slivers of rainbow light then began to shine down from the sky, revealing a hundred-meter-wide eight trigram formation enveloped entirely in rainbow light. It directly shot down from the sky without any resistance.

Ku Yao’s expression vastly changed and instantly pointed at the fire flood dragon without any further thought. The flood dragon immediately raised its head and spouted a scarlet stream of light from its mouth, directly striking at the bottom portion of the formation. The formation faintly trembled for a moment, but it

continued falling as if unaffected.

With a paled complexion, Ku Yao rubbed his hands together before suddenly raising them, shooting a dense barrage of countless fist-sized fireballs into the sky.

Han Li's heart stirred at the sight of this. This wasn't something that was a result of many fireball talismans, but something that had been instantly produced by one's own cultivation. Spell warrior spirit techniques were vastly beyond what ordinary elemental Daoist techniques were capable, and were far more useful in battle as a result.

As Han Li's mind wandered, the many fireballs struck the underside of the huge formation like shower of meteors. However, this strike also proved to be of little effect. The diagram continued falling down with immense speed as it enveloped Ku Yao and his flood dragon.

At that moment, the cultivators and spell warriors watching the battle were no longer able to see Ku Yao; they only saw the huge eight trigram formation slowly revolve as they surrounded it.

Old Man Ma didn't reveal the slightest delight from having his attack succeed. Rather, he solemnly sat cross-legged with his hands forming an incantation gesture as soft white light twirled around his body. At that same moment, the huge diagram seemed to have merged with the rainbow light and suddenly released rolls of deafening thunder — pulsing with light as it flickered.

The shriveled spell warrior wore a worried expression on his face. He turned to the black-robed figure and politely asked, "Sir Heavenweep, will Sage Ku Yao be fine in there? If it's dangerous, we don't need to respect the agreement for a one on one; we can just go in and rescue him. It is truly beyond belief that this Nascent Soul cultivator could possess such an odd ancient treasure!"

The black-robed figure softly laughed. "Don't worry about him," he said with a careless tone, "While that Supreme Eight Trigram

Diagram is a truly formidable ancient treasure, this cultivator still hasn't grasped the true method to use it. He is barely able to use it by forcing his spiritual power into the treasure. This won't be able to hold Fellow Daoist Ku for much longer. This brutish method of using the formation diagram will surely consume a great amount of magic power. How foolish! But still, it is no surprise that few know the true method to use such a rare ancient treasure in this remote area." His words seemed to carry a tone of disdain towards the cultivators of the Heavenly South.

The shriveled spell warrior relaxed when he heard this and decided to temporarily hold on his plan to organize a party of spell warriors to rescue Ku Yao.

As for the bald man and the others, their expressions possessed both worry and joy. They had been excited when they saw the spell warrior trapped by the eight trigrams formation. But when they saw Old Man Ma still maintaining the formation with a solemn expression with strange sounds occasionally sounded out from within the formation, they knew that the battle was far from over.

For a time, the old man had actually been cursing without end! This treasure was something that he had only recently acquired, and he had only previously used it against Core Formation cultivators. Those cultivators had been entirely powerless before this treasure and were each killed with ease.

However, this spell warrior was able to temporarily obstruct the diagram through use of his own attacks along with the unceasing, ferocious attacks of his flame dragon. Stabilizing the interruptions caused by these attacks had drained much spiritual power from the formation diagram.

The battle in the air grew calm for the moment. Apart from faint explosions sounding out from within the formation diagram, there was only silence.

Worry became more apparent on the faces of Heavenly South

cultivators. Han Li was the only one who still maintained a calm expression as he watched the battle unfold.

Silvermoon clicked her tongue from the back of Han Li's mind in disappointment. 'That Fellow Daoist Ma is truly overexerting that treasure by using the Supreme Eight Trigram Diagram in this manner. That ancient treasure is no weaker than the Purple Cloudlace.'

With a still expression, Han Li inwardly asked, 'Supreme Eight Trigram Diagram? You know of this ancient treasure?'

'Of course,' Silvermoon quickly answered, 'It was a renown ancient treasure in the past. However, it seems this particular treasure is of poor quality. Otherwise, that spell warrior should've already perished, despite the old man's ignorance usage of the treasure. If it were a high quality Eight Trigram Diagram, the magic power consumption wouldn't be so great.'

After some hesitation Han Li asked, 'If a poor quality diagram can display this much power, then what would a good quality diagram be capable of? When you say that the Purple Cloudlace is no weaker than this treasure, could it be that there is a secret method that must be used to draw out its full power?'

Silvermoon smiled and replied, 'The Purple Cloudlace isn't that troublesome to use! You simply need to pour spiritual power into it and use it. Furthermore, the Jadesun True Fire only takes a few tries before it is properly grasped.'

When Han Li heard this, he grew silent. He gaze then turned towards the sky once more and he frowned, thinking, 'Not good.'

A huge explosion rippled through the air, and the Eight Trigram Diagram suddenly distorted. Countless beams of red light shot out from the diagram, tearing away at the formation.

As this shocking scene occurred, another series of explosions sounded out from the corner of the formation. A ball raging flames

emerged and shot thirty meters straight up before fading away, revealing Ku Yao with a blood-red complexion as he stood on top of the fire flood dragon. The flood dragon had returned to the size of three meters from an unknown time, and appeared vastly weakened.

To the side, Old Man Ma didn't appear much better. His face was pale and his eyes listless. However, the old man gritted his teeth and waved his arm at the shredded formation diagram. In a flash of rainbow light, it flew back into the sky and dropped back down into the old man's hand as a scroll.

# Chapter 734: Heavenflash Devil Arts

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When the old man saw that the scroll was in tatters, his face greatly paled. It was clearly ruined beyond use.

“What a pity!” The black-robed figure spoke with a trace of regret, “If Fellow Daoist Ku Yao hadn’t been in such a rush to break free and used his fire spirit’s vitality to stall of time, that cultivator’s magic power would’ve been exhausted and he would’ve taken the initiative to dispel the formation diagram regardless.”

The shriveled cultivator pondered for a moment before he found himself agreeing.

With the spell warrior broken free, Old Man Ma’s complexion turned sickly pale as he grasped onto the scroll. He quickly placed it away in his storage pouch, and viciously gazed at Ku Yao. Ku Yao snorted in response and had the flood dragon beneath him surge once more with flames and red light.

The shriveled spell warrior suddenly shouted from above, “Sage Ku Yao, cease!” He then turned to the Heavenly South cultivators and said, “How about ending this battle in a draw? Both of their magic power is nearly exhausted. Nothing will result from having this battle continue.”

The bald man was somewhat surprised to hear this. After exchanging a look with Gu Shuangpu, he nodded his head, “That is fine. Let’s have this battle end.”

Although Old Man Ma felt somewhat opposed this decision, he knew that it would be futile to continue the battle and flew back without any better option. Ku Yao also felt gloomy at this decision and begrudgingly recalled his flood dragon before flying back into the spell warrior ranks.

Old Man Ma returned down below and received a few consoling

words from the bald man, easing the tension from the old man's face.

But at that moment, the black-robed spell warrior and the shriveled old man was muttering something to each other. As a result, the black-robed figure gently floated in the air and arrived at the location of the previous battle.

He gloomily swept his gaze past the other cultivators and a trace of contempt was revealed from his eyes. In his hoarse voice, he said, "This time, you will be fighting me, but I will say this first. This battle will last until someone is dead. Don't have any delusions of stopping this battle while it is in progress."

The black-robed figure's arrogant words infuriated Gu Shuangpu and the bald man. However, the two didn't dare to rise up to the challenge. They both knew that two Nascent Soul cultivators have already perished at the hands of this strange spell warrior. As they still greatly valued their lives, they were hesitant.

"Let me try him on." Han Li indifferently said.

The bald man blinked in surprise upon seeing Han Li take the initiative to fight, but soon, he inwardly sighed with relief. "Ah! Fellow Daoist Han wishes to go? You must take care. If there is something amiss, we will naturally go to rescue you."

Han Li smiled and said little else. Azure light glowed from from his body before he streaked across the skies. In the blink of an eye, he arrived before the black-robed figure, and expressionlessly stood in the air with his hands held behind his back.

The black-robed figure appraised Han Li for a moment before his eyes began to turn from black to green in what appeared to be a monstrous display.

Han Li narrowed his eyes and asked, "Are you demon or ghost?"

"You don't think this old man is human?" The black-figure coldly chuckled. At that same moment, inky threads of black Qi

began to wrap around his body. Ghostly wails soon began to howl, followed by gusts of Yin wind.

Han Li took a short breath and calmly said, “So you were originally a man, but it seems that you’ve cultivated the Dao of a demon or ghost.”

“Humph! Junior, you speak too much rubbish. There is no need to examine me any further as you will soon die by my hand. Don’t waste your effort.” With that said, black Qi suddenly surged around his body, nearly hiding him entirely from sight.

“As I don’t have the patience to play with you, I’ll be taking your life now.” The black-robed old man sinisterly laughed and formed an incantation gesture with his hands. Suddenly, he grew to giant about six meters in height.

Although the vortex of Yin Qi surrounding him mostly blocked him out of sight, one could faintly make out two horns poking out from the robes and two fangs as well. It was no wonder so many cultivators believed this unfamiliar spell warrior was a transformed oddity.

Han Li’s eyes shined with blue light, revealing the huge man’s ferocious appearance.

“What?” Han Li was shocked by the demonic appearance of the huge man. His current appearance was exactly the same as the one of the phantoms of the Six Apex Devils he encountered when he fought the disciple of Archsaint Six Paths.

[] Chapter 573

“What relation does your esteemed self have with Archsaint Six Paths?”

The huge man evilly grinned after a moment of surprise. “Who is this Archsaint Six Paths? Don’t think that your nonsense will allow you to stall for time. Accept your death!” He then raised his hand and scattered some of the black Qi, suddenly shooting a black

object towards Han Li. However, the object flashed with black light as soon as it left the cover of the black Qi and disappeared from sight.

Han Li's expression sank and suddenly shot back ten meters. At that same moment, a huge ghost claw appeared where he was originally standing. The attack was so sudden, it seemed to have materialized out of thin air.

"Yi!" The huge demonic figure yelped in surprise at seeing his attack miss.

Han Li stared at the ghost hand and indifferently said, "Not bad at all. Although you aren't a ghost Dao cultivator — as you cultivate Devil Dao techniques — your methods of attack are quite similar to ghost cultivators. If one were to truly regard you as a ghost cultivator, they would definitely suffer."

The large demonic man stayed still as it coldly glanced at Han Li.

At that same moment, Han Li frowned and he moved about ten meters to the side in a blur. As a result, yet another green ghost claw had silently struck where he once stood.

The huge man was no longer able to keep his calm after missing a second time and asked, "Since you've already dodged two of my attacks, could it be that you'd seen other ghost cultivators in the past?"

"Of course I have. How else could I have so easily dodged your attacks?" Han Li replied smilingly with a half-truth.

"Humph! Your esteemed self is actually a vastly experienced individual. Regardless, even if you know that I use Devil Dao techniques, what will come of it? With the might of the Heavenflash Devil Arts, you will be dead in only a moment." The huge man spoke sinisterly. He then abruptly released an intense, ear-piercing whistle that was capable of even splitting stone.

When Han Li saw this, his calm expression turned stern.

The black Qi enveloping the huge man began to rapidly revolve in place. Soon after, an astonishingly powerful wave of devilish Qi suddenly erupted out of thin air, and the huge man shot out from the black Qi, instantly arriving before Han Li as he left afterimages in his wake.

With a slight movement of his arms, an impenetrable flurry of black-green claws immediately surrounded him. It seemed that he intended to use his claws to cut Han Li into countless pieces.

Han Li took a deep breath and wore an odd expression as he remained in place. He slapped his hands together before spreading them out, summoning a net of golden lightning around him. With thunder ringing in the air, Han Li glanced at the claws around him with complete fearlessness.

Without any further thought, the huge black figure then ordered the claws to strike Han Li without mercy.

From the huge black figure's point of view, common devilish arts might be subdued by lightning attribute techniques, but the Heavenflash Devil Arts is by no measure common. It wouldn't be stopped by some trifling lightning. However, the cultivator he faced seemed to know quite a bit, much to his unease; he felt it best to immediately dispose of him.

But before the black figure finished his thoughts, he suddenly felt his own claws grow hot, soon followed by an unimaginable pain. Golden light then brightly chined from before him. The golden lightning net had actually broken through the claw phantoms and was making its way to envelop him.

Unable to protect himself from behind and trapped by the net of golden lightning, a legend he once heard suddenly appeared in his mind. In the past when he was learning of this devilish art, his master had repeated warned him of the greatest nemeses of the Heavenflash Devil Arts. But because he had never encountered any equal opponents after cultivating this devilish art, he had

forgotten about this matter!

“Golden lightning? It can’t be! It’s so similar. Don’t tell me —” The black figure’s expression grew completely tense and he felt his heart drop. Unwilling to remain idle in the oncoming danger, he immediately howled and had his tall stature suddenly shrink in size, becoming a dwarf that was only a meter tall, buying him more time before the golden net struck him.

In that time that he bought, his shrunken body suddenly fluctuated in size before hastily erupting into countless threads of black light — scattering in every direction.

# Chapter 735: Two Tailed Serpent

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A cold glint shined from Han Li's eyes, and he suddenly shook his hands, shooting a bolt of lightning towards the golden net. Countless arcs of lightning began to spark from the net upon impact, causing it to instantly constrict. Then, each of the black threads collided against the golden lightning.

With a huge flash, the golden lightning turned the black threads of Qi into ash, each burned thread accompanied by a wretched and tragic scream.

Soon, the remaining black threads returned towards the center of the golden net, condensing into a glossy black demon Nascent. Its face was filled to the brim with fear. It opened its mouth and spat out clouds and clouds pitch-black Yin Qi. They quickly wrapped around it in layers in an attempt to prevent the Divine Devilbane Lightning from approaching any closer to its body.

Han Li's face was expressionless apart from the sneer that momentarily appeared. From his hand, he shot a bolt of lightning — so dazzling and bright it was difficult to see — and enveloped the demon Nascent. Yet another miserable shriek soon followed and the rolls of thunder quieted down, leaving only silence for a short while.

When Han Li saw this, he inwardly sighed with relief before retracting his remaining lightning and taking a pitch-black storage pouch into his hand. He then raised his head and expressionlessly swept his gaze past the spell warriors up above. Then with azure light shining from his body, he flew back down towards the Heavenly South cultivators.

After an exchange of a few brief words, Han Li exterminated his opponent with Divine Devilbane Lightning with unbelievable speed.

Not only were the Heavenly South cultivators dumbfounded, the

Moulan spell warriors completely shaken with disbelief.

While the Heavenly South cultivators didn't know about the finer details of the black-robed figure, they had a general idea. These mysterious cultivators should've arrived at the Moulan Plains from a great continent. Although they didn't know why these cultivators suddenly appeared at the Moulan Plains, they reached some sort of agreement with the three Divine Sages of the Moulan Tribes. And it was clear to see that these cultivator had abilities far beyond cultivators of a similar grade — before the true war even started, two Heavenly South Nascent Soul cultivators had perished one after another, earning the confidence of these two Moulan Sages.

As for why the black-robed figure participated in the second battle, it was because he felt that there were too many Nascent Soul stage cultivators that were guarding the grand formation, and he felt it best to first exterminate one while he could. But who could've known that this ordinary appearing youth would actually be able to kill the black-robed figure with ease. Not even his Nascent Soul was able to escape, much to the shock of the two spell warriors.

When the shriveled spell warrior and Ku Yao regained clarity of mind, he glanced at each other with terror and hesitated for a moment — not knowing whether or not they should continue the battle, or deal with the uproar of the spell warriors behind them. But at that moment, they suddenly heard a faint, nearly inaudible voice speak in their ear.

"Retreat for now. Our momentum has already died. Let us further consider our plans tomorrow. When that time comes, that formation may already be... hehe! While Heavenweep's death will be inconvenient, I'll personally explain the matter to the Divine Sages." The voice sounded neutral in tone, but the words carried an unmistakable air of command.

The shriveled man the Ku Yao were stunned for a moment upon

hearing the voice, but they soon complied with their orders and began to give commands to the spell warriors under their command. With some disturbance, the army made an about face and slowly retreated.

The two sages naturally brought up the rear, gloomily watching the cultivators as they retreated. They glared at in particularly Han Li before flying off.

Gu Shuangpu watched the spell warrior army retreat and doubtfully asked, “Should we pursue them?”

“Leave them be.” The bald man shook his head and said, “Although they’re retreating, they still haven’t been defeated. If we were to pursue them, we could find ourselves surrounded. Also, we have to guard the grand formation. It’ll be best if we nurtured our strength and bide our time. Our Yellow Dragon Mountains’ Thousand Soundform Formation isn’t easily broken. If the Moulan wish to seize it, they will need to double their forces at the very least.”

After that was said, the bald man couldn’t help but turn his eyes towards Han Li. Due to the surprise of Han Li managing to kill the black-robed cultivator, the cultivators found themselves in an awkward silence, all at a loss of what to say.

As of current, Han Li was wearing a faint smile as he fiddled with a black storage pouch in his hands.

Originally, Han Li’s faint smiles hardly inspired any feelings in these cultivators. But after he managed to kill a Nascent Soul cultivator, Han Li’s smile now gave them a profound and odd feeling — not to mention that their original contempt for him was now completely gone.

The bald man smiled and said, “Fellow Daoist Han, congratulations on slaying a high grade spell warrior. I will be certain to inform the Nine Nations Alliance of your achievement. They will most definitely reward you greatly.”

Old Man Ma and Gu Shuangpu also congratulated him with a smile. However, Han Li's expression still remained as subtle as before, despite the faint admiration and respect their tones held.

As if ignoring this, Han Li simply exchanged a few courteous pleasantries with them as his gaze unconsciously wandered to one of them in particular. When nobody noticed this, he couldn't help but wear an indistinct smirk.

Once the spell warrior army disappeared from sight, the bald man opened a passageway into the mist down below and the party hastily disappeared from sight, the mist closing its entrance soon afterwards. Now, the surroundings of the Yellow Dragon Mountains grew peaceful once more.

When Han Li and company returned to the hall, they had a quick discussion about the battles that occurred today before reach returning to their own residences to rest. Old Man Ma in particular not only had his treasure destroyed, but his vitality had greatly suffered as well. He was in dire need to rest and recover. Thus in the blink of an eye, only the bald man remained in the hall.

He sat in the main building and lowered his head, his mind lost in thought. A short moment later, he suddenly raised his eyebrow and a strange expression appeared on his face. He softly shouted, "Who is there? Come out."

Then with a flash of light, another person appeared in the hall. "Hehe! Brother Lu's abilities are truly profound. Just as I entered, he was able to perceive me. It is not wonder why the Nine Nations Alliance had you guard the formation alone."

The bald man frowned and wore a strange expression. "You? Why aren't you resting? Why did you come back stealthily?"

"It's nothing. I merely discovered a secret. I felt that I should have a discussion with you."

The bald man glanced at him with an appraising look and

puzzlingly asked, “Secret? What secret?”

“The Drifting Cloud Sect’s Fellow Daoist Han is likely a spy for the Moulan!” He spoke without the slightest hesitation and slowly walked inside.

The bald man involuntarily laughed and his face was filled with disbelief. “Spy? Could it be that your mind if unclear? Fellow Daoist Han had just slain a Nascent Soul spell warrior today. The thought is ridiculous.”

“I know that Brother Lu might not believe it, but I have evidence. You’ll know that I’m speaking the truth.” This person sighed and bitterly smiled before summoning a jade slip into his hand with a flash of light. He then stepped forward and neared the large man.

The bald man wore an expression of astonishment and stood up to face him. He then calmly took the jade slip into his hand.

At the same time the bald man took the jade slip into his hand, his expression vastly changed and a fierce expression appeared in his eyes. In a flash of green light, the jade slip suddenly turned into a small emerald-green snake. It bit the bald man’s wrist with the speed of lightning.

With an expression of shock, he couldn’t even scream before he motionlessly collapsed onto the floor, his complexion turned a black-violet.

Joy flickered from the man’s face and he muttered, “The Twintailed Jade Serpent is truly as poisonous as its reputation. It is no less inferior than the Ten Supremes Poison. After the bite, it robs even a Nascent Soul the power to escape. If the snake was able to fly, it’d be an incredibly powerful method of killing other cultivators.” He then took a step forward to examine the corpse that was slowly melting.

The small dark-green snake released its fangs from the corpse and slid away, revealing the two slim tails on its back. Its two tails

struck the earth and then flung itself into the palm of its master. It coiled around itself and hissed with its purple-black tongue, its eyes glowing with a eerie dark-green light.

At that moment, this person lightly waved his hand and took the corpse's storage pouch into his hand. He then excitedly searched the storage pouch with his spiritual sense as if he were looking for something in particular.

# Chapter 736: Exposure

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A short moment later, this person softly whispered, “It can’t be, where is the command medallion? I clearly saw him place it in the storage pouch.” He then resentfully turned the bag upside down and tossed its belongings onto the ground, forming a pile of various inferior magic tools and a few low grade spirit stones.

Once the man clearly saw what was on the ground, his complexion turned deathly pale and his body suddenly flashed with green light. Without another word, he shot towards the hall exit in a streak of light.

A long sigh echoed through the hall. Soon, silver light flickered from every wall, enveloping them in waves of silver light and forming a huge barrier of light all around him.

With a cold snort, the man continued without any intention of stopping. He slapped his waist and summoned a jet-black pangolin spirit beast, striking at the light that blocked his path. With a muffled bang, the spirit beast was repelled by the light barrier with the barrier completely unharmed.

In the man’s alarm, he suddenly gritted his teeth and spat out a blue trident from his mouth. In an instant, the magic treasure duplicated into two and combined together as a streak of large blue light before striking the light barrier. Then with a muffled explosion, the blue light was reflected ten meters back before spinning to the ground.

“There is no need for Brother Gu to go through so much trouble.” The bald man’s voice echoed throughout the hall. “As this place is the core of the grand formation of the Yellow Dragon Mountains, it is only natural for it to be guarded by the most powerful restrictions. Don’t think that you’ll be able to leave.”

The blue light faded away to reveal the Controlling Spirit Sect’s Gu Shuangpu. However, his complexion was deathly white and his

gaze was brooding, barely able to keep his calm. “So you didn’t die, you used a flesh puppet. I had heard that there was a mysterious cultivator amongst the Nine Nations Union that was adept at refining flesh puppets identical to oneself, where one cannot even differentiate the true person from the puppet. I didn’t actually expect this to be true.”

Then in a flash of white light, the bald man revealed himself from within the hall. He glanced at Gu Shuangpu from outside the barrier before turning his gaze to the ruined corpse on the floor. “Brother Gu knows much about the affairs of our Nine Nations Union as expected as well as the matter of doppelganger puppets. That’s right, what you killed was a corpse puppet that I had controlled. Even a Nascent Soul cultivator such as yourself was unable to tell any difference from its exterior.”

“Humph! Rubbish! If I hadn’t used my spiritual sense to closely examine your doppelganger out of fear of being detected, I definitely wouldn’t have been deceived. Besides, even if I meticulously cultivated the Twintailed Jade Serpent for several hundreds of years, its incredibly vicious poison definitely shouldn’t have been capable of killing a Nascent Soul cultivator alone.

I originally planned only to use the serpent to heavily injure you, but I had mistakenly overestimated the toxicity of the snake upon seeing you perish in a single blow. It seems I’ve become arrogant.” Gu Shuangpu spoke with an icy expression, but a trace of regret was betrayed from his eyes.

The bald man emotionlessly said, “Hehe! I had requested a puppet to be refined for me out of a moment’s fancy. I didn’t truly think that a dead corpse would actually be refined to my likeness. However, spending this corpse puppet to discover that Brother Gu was a traitor was well worth the spirit stones the puppet had cost.”

Gu Shuangpu’s cheek twitched and grew silent for a spell. But a short moment later, he icily said, “From your tone, you seemed to

know that I would come find you and you had already prepared a substitute ahead of time. Could it be that you've discovered something amiss after I arrived at the Yellow Dragon Mountains?"

The bald man shook his head. "Of course not. How could I suspect an elder of the Controlling Spirit Sect without cause or reason. I was merely given a warning from someone else. I originally felt unsure of the matter, but now it has been made certain." He then turned his head to the sides of the hall and shouted, "Fellow Daoist Han, Brother Ma, you may come out!"

When Gu Shuangpu heard this, he was no longer able to maintain his gloomy expression. Alarm was betrayed from his face.

Then in a flash of yellow light from both sides of the hall, a calm Han Li and a grave Old Man Ma walked out.

With a pained expression, the old man sorrowfully said, "I didn't expect that Fellow Daoist Gu would actually do this. What kind of benefits did the Moulan offer you to do such a deranged thing?"

Gu Shuangpu stared at the old man and coldly snorted. "Deranged? I was originally from the Moulan tribes. How could my decision possibly be deranged?"

"You're a person from the Moulan?" The party of cultivators couldn't help but reveal surprise.

"Of course." A maddened expression appeared on Gu Shuangpu's face. "Did you believe that benefits were enough to rope in a Nascent Soul cultivator like me? You Heavenly South cultivators should realize how sparse cultivation resources are in the Moulan plains.

There are countless talented low grade spell warriors that never progress in their cultivation due to a lack of spirit stones and medicine pills, and they turned to a pile of bones after only a hundred years because they lacked the optimal circumstances for cultivation. Why is that you Heavenly South cultivators were able

to take such a good area, and us spell warriors must make due with a sparse few spirit stones to use? So long as the Moulan acquire the cultivation resources of the Heavenly South, in less than a hundred years the number of spell warriors will double. With such vast strength, we'll be able to defeat the Soaring Tribe's Immortals, and rule over the entirety of the Moulan plains."

When Gu Shuangpu said that, the others couldn't help but glance at each other in dismay.

Han Li expressionly asked, "Defeat the Soaring Tribe's Immortals? It seems the Moulan had suffered a decisive defeat by these Immortals, and now a majority of the Moulan plains are being held by these towards Immortal masters. Is that why you've staked it all in order to invade the Heavenly South?"

"How... How do you know of this?" Gu Shuangpu was stunned for a moment before suddenly something came to his mind and he viciously glared at Han Li. "You eavesdropped on my sound transmissions with Sage Le."

Han Li expressionlessly said, "It seems Brother Gu had realized it quite quickly, but don't blame me. Who was it that told you to so brazenly sound transmissions in front of me. With my slightly superior spiritual sense, I was just able to listen to your voice transmissions, and informed Fellow Daoist Lu of the matter."

With a pale complexion, Gu Shuangpu rigidly stared at Han Li and resentfully said, "Good, very good! All of my secrets are leaked! I've been concealed in the Heavenly South for so long, yet it can't be anything but unjust to fall to such a careless mistake. But to say that your spiritual sense is only slightly superior? Humph! Your esteemed self is far too modest. How could our secret voice transmission technique compare to common sound transmissions?

Unless your spiritual sense is as strong as a late Nascent Soul cultivator, there was no other way you could've eavesdropped on

my conversation.”

Old Man Ma shouted in alarm, “Late Nascent Soul stage?”

The bald man was also alarmed and glanced at Han Li with amazement.

Han Li frowned. He didn’t think that this matter would unintentionally reveal the strength of his spiritual sense. But soon, he eased his brow and instead wore a relaxed expression, leaving the bald man and Old Man Ma feeling skeptical of Gu Shuangpu’s words. After all, it was a bit too outrageous for an early Nascent Soul cultivator to have a spiritual sense on the level of a late Nascent Soul cultivator.

The bald man reluctantly turned his gaze away from Han Li and icily gazed at Gu Shuangpu inside the light barrier. “Since we now know you are a spy, don’t blame us for being ruthless. Although I wish to spare your life and hand you over to the enforcers of the union, there is a great battle ahead of us; we do not have the option to keep you alive.”

Soon after, he flipped his hand and summoned a command medallion that flickered with silver light. He raised the command medallion into the air, shooting a beam of light at the barrier. The barrier cleanly absorbed the beam and began to flicker, suddenly shining with countless silver flowers, each vastly beautiful.

Gu Shuangpu saw the silver flowers just like a poisonous insect and his expression grew unsightly. Without further thought, he quickly slapped several places around his body, placing several layers of various colored light around his body. At that same time, he pointed to the blue trident in front of it. It began to spin above his head and formed a barrier of blue light around him.

Once the silver flowers began to rupture and fill the light barrier, the bald man turned around with disinterest and solemnly spoke to Han Li and Old Man Ma. “Let’s go, there’s nothing good to see. Although his cultivation is high, he won’t be able to endure the

restrictions for long, and will soon have his soul destroyed. We still have to deal with the aftermath. Although this person was a Moulan spy, he was still a Controlling Spirit Sect elder. We will have much explaining to do to the union.”

# Chapter 737: Spiritfuse Serpent Monster

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Seeing that the large man possessed such confidence in the hall's restrictions, Han Li blinked but said nothing else. Old Man Ma also felt somewhat doubtful of the bald man's words and frowned.

Han Li smiled and suddenly said, "To tell the truth, although this matter is somewhat troublesome, there is no need to worry too much over it."

Not daring to ignore Han Li given his previous accomplishments, the bald man hesitantly asked, "What does Brother Han mean?" Old Man Ma also looked at Han Li with astonishment.

Han Li rubbed his chin and said, "Our alliance leaders should surely know something of the Moulan spies infiltrating into the Heavenly South. They must've caught some in the past. So as long as this high grade cultivator was a spy, the Controlling Spirit Sect won't be able to do much about it."

Since we all come from different alliances, most cultivators won't think that we had deliberately framed the Controlling Spirit Sect Elder. As such, we only have to explain ourselves and deliver the information we acquired from the Moulan. Once they've verified this information, no trouble should come of this. I believe the Controlling Spirit Sect should've had their own misgivings about Elder Gu by now. Surely Fellow Daoist Gu wasn't able to perfectly conceal everything after so many years. And even if they don't, they should be able to find something suspicious from his past movements."

The bald man unfurled his brow and suddenly revealed a white jade slip in his hand. He wore an odd expression and said, "Brother Han's words are reasonable. I had also used a secret technique to record his previous words in a jade slip as well. We'll be able to use it as evidence when the time comes."

After hearing Han Li's explanation and seeing the bald man's jade

slip, Old Man Ma breathed a sigh of relief. “That will do. It is a pity that Fellow Daoist Bu wasn’t able to come out and stand witness as his injuries were so severe that he had to conceal himself, but it won’t pose a problem.”

Once that was said, the three had a more detailed discussion about the matter when hisses suddenly sounded out from the silver light barrier. The three were greatly surprised by this and they glanced at each other with bewilderment.

Just as the bald man thought to take action, a huge explosion of flames ruptured from within the barrier. A green claw flew out and struck the light barrier like a bolt of lightning, causing it to fiercely tremble.

“What’s this? He still has the strength to shock the restriction.” The bald man was greatly alarmed and shouted with disbelief.

He then formed a incantation gesture and struck the barrier with a white spell seal, causing the numerous flowers of light to cease, revealing the scene inside.

The bald man and Old Man Ma felt their breaths turn cold. Han Li’s expression was also sullen. Gu Shuangpu had disappeared, only to be replaced with a half-man, half-demon serpent monster.

This monstrosity was wearing Gu Shuangpu’s clothes but its face and limb was entirely covered by green scales. Its two eyes were icily eerie and its ten fingers were razor sharp. It also had two meter-long tails that were gently tapping the floor.

The scaly face had clearly belonged to Gu Shuangpu. When it opened its mouth, its serpent tongue flickered and it uttered serpent hisses, much to the disgust and fear of those present.

When Old Man Ma clearly saw the monster’s appearance, his face turned deathly pale, and he flusteredly shouted, “This is the Spiritfuse Technique! He had turned into one with the Twintailed Jade Serpent.”

When the bald man heard the old man, he also wore an expression of furious alarm. “Spiritfuse Technique? Isn’t that a lost secret technique? Does he not fear being banished from the cycle of reincarnation?”

Soon after, he rigidly stared at the serpentine monster as if it were a great enemy and his hastily slapped his storage pouch. In a flash of silver light, the restriction command talisman appeared in his hand.

The large man puffed a breath of spirit Qi on the medallion before tossing it into the air. But just as he began to hurriedly utter an incantation, the monster inside the barrier began to take action.

It sullenly swept its gaze past the three outside the barrier, and quickly flicked its tongue before splitting open its cheek and spitting out a purple-black liquid towards the three.

At that moment, the bald man saw this and ceased his incantation, pointing towards the command medallion instead. The medallion began to radiate with silver light and shot over ten silver spell seals at the barrier — each absorbed seal releasing a dragon’s cry. The barrier then flashed violently several times and grew thicker. And the countless silver flow within the barriers then began to condense at the top.

When the black-purple liquid struck the barrier, a small portion of the light barrier instantly turned black, and soon the color spread to nearly an area of three meters.

A malicious expression appeared on the serpent monster’s face. At that same moment, its two tails struck at the floor, launching it forward in a streak of green light and fiercely striking at the barrier with its claws. With a bang, a large hole was torn through the hardy barrier as if it were paper.

The monster was delighted by the sight of this and its body blurred as it attempted to escape. When the bald man saw this, he wore an expression of horror and spat out a white rod from his

mouth, forming a curtain of light around his body.

Old Man Ma had also done the same. With a nervous expression, he spat out his ruler magic treasure and covered his body in a layer of light. The two clearly understood how fearsome was an early Nascent Soul cultivator that used the Spiritfuse Technique. Let alone its techniques, its cultivation should be on par with a mid Nascent Soul cultivator.

When the two saw the monster was about to escape, they naturally planned to fight it through a battle of attrition. They wouldn't take the initiative to strike until it struck first. But at that moment, Han Li sighed with a helpless tone and decided to take action. With a faint blur, he closed the short distance and appeared in front of the tear in the barrier.

When the serpentine monster was just about to escape and saw Han Li blocking its way, a malicious gaze flickered from its eyes. Without a single trace or warning, it opened its mouth and spat out purple-black venom.

“Be careful! Fellow Daoist Han, quickly dodge!” The bald man and Old Man Ma both shouted in alarm. It wasn’t because of any concern from familiarity, but that they needed all the strength they could muster to fight against this monster, not to mention the looming threat of the spell warriors army.

Seemingly ignoring the two’s shouts of alarm, Han Li stared at the oncoming purple-black liquid and an odd expression flickered from his eyes. With a deliberate raise of his arm, he bent his fingers, covering them in a layer of flickering blue flames, and stretched his hand forward to grab the poison.

The two other Nascent Soul cultivators felt their heart drop at the sight of this. As for the serpentine monster, it spat out another blob of poison without any hesitation.

A nearly indistinct sneer appeared on Han Li’s face and blue light shined from his eyes. An eruption of light suddenly appeared

between Han Li and the monster. The brilliant light wildly flickered several times before quickly dimming.

The bald man and Old Man Ma hastily blinked and glanced over. What they saw left them in shock.

They simply saw the serpentine monster wear an expression of rapt delight just as it was about to escape the light barrier, but its body was now covered in sparkling crystal, turning into a blue ice sculpture. As for the venom, it had turned into a slim thread of ice that emerged from its mouth, spanning about a meter long.

At an unknown time, Han Li had appeared behind the monster and had placed his blue flaming hand on the back of the monster's neck.

Han Li took his hand off of its neck and stared at the ice sculpture. "As expected, this is the first time the spiritfused monster has come to life. Although it was quite intelligent, its experience was far too shallow. There was nothing to be afraid off." He then raised his other hand, and a dense arc of golden lightning shot out from his palm and struck the ice sculpture, swapping a slim net of golden lightning around it.

The blue radiance and the golden light fused together before promptly exploding, turning the ice sculpture into inch-sized chunks. With blue specks of light filling the air, a fist-sized black-purple object had shot out, but it was caught by the golden net. Inhuman wails soon began to scream from it.

A stern expression flickered from Han Li's face. Han Li closed the hand that emitted the lightning and caused the net to constrict, rupturing it into golden brilliance and causing it to disappear from view.

# Chapter 738: Beaten at Their Own Game

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With a screech, the golden radiance turned the Demon Nascent into a cloud of smoke that soon scattered.

It was said that the Spiritfuse Technique was an incredibly vicious ancient Devil Dao technique. Of course, the Demon Nascent that resulted from it was likewise incredible vulnerable to the Divine Devilbane Lightning, and was quickly destroyed — incapable of using instant movement to escape.

In the distance, the bald man had dropped his jaw and couldn't muster the force to open his mouth. As for Old Man Ma, his face appeared calm enough, but his eyes were wide open and he couldn't bring himself to say anything.

Han Li had already anticipated that the two would feel shocked, and he maintained his calm appearance. He summoned the storage pouch on the floor and the blue trident into his hands and then observed them with his spiritual sense before tossing them to the bald man.

Han Li glanced at the two and slowly said, “Although we did kill him, we should give his magic treasure and storage pouch back to the Controlling Spirit Sect in an untouched stage. That way, the Controlling Spirit Sect won’t have anything to say.”

When the bald man heard Han Li speak, he instantly recovered from his shock and immediately agreed, “Brother Han’s words are very reasonable. We’ll do as you suggested!”

Old Man Ma’s mouth moved several times, but no words were able to come out. Rather, he put away his ruler magic treasure with an embarrassed expression.

Han Li’s killing the black-robed man could be attributed to carelessness and luck. But this time, he managed to empty-handedly kill the spiritfused monster that possessed cultivation on

par with a mid Nascent Soul cultivator, an opponent that was beyond their capabilities.

Without any prior discussion, they both felt that the Drifting Cloud Sect's Elder Han could possibly have the abilities to deal with any opponent under late Nascent Soul stage. When this thought came to their mind, the two were unable to keep a calm appearance.

Han Li indifferently said, "Since the matter has been resolved, I will be going back to take a rest. If the spell warriors return, please call for me."

"Brother Han, go ahead. We will naturally oversee this area." The bald man's words unconsciously carried a tone of respect.

Han Li smiled and waved his arm before leaving the hall.

The previous display of Celestial Ice Flames and Divine Devilbane Lightning was a forced measure. If he hadn't taken the initiative to attack, the serpentine monster would've escaped and caused no end of problems for the future; the bald man and the Old Man Ma would've found it difficult to bar the monster's way. Moreover, he didn't feel the need to conceal his true abilities once he condensed a Nascent Soul.

His current circumstances were much different than when he was in the Scattered Star Seas. He had to keep himself hidden at the time because his cultivation was meager and he was in an unfamiliar area — if the wrong people noticed him, he would be hunted down. But now that he condensed a Nascent Soul, he now walked in the upper echelon of the cultivation world, and since there were only a sparse few that would pose much threat to him, he didn't feel much apprehension about revealing himself.

Moreover, given the current invasion of the Moulan, it would be impossible to continue hiding his abilities. At the very least, the Ghost Spirit Sect and Marquis Nanlong's party should know of his true abilities from what he had displayed at their treasure hunt in

the Moulan Plains.

As such, he may as well reveal his true strength so he could intimidate any small fry that plotted against him. Otherwise, if any fellow cultivators believed him to be weak, it would provoke some needless problems.

Of course, Han Li wouldn't easily reveal all of his killing moves.

As Han Li pondered this, he also recalled the strange feeling from the Purple Apex Flames when he enveloped the Demon Nascent. Just a moment ago, he had used the Purple Apex Flames together with the Celestial Ice Flames in order to freeze the monster in an instant.

Then when he recalled the Purple Apex Flames, he felt it become somewhat unstable. It seemed using the full might of these flames required a certain level of higher cultivation, as he had expected. With a feeling of self-mockery, Han Li slowly walked towards his residence.

When Old Man Ma saw Han Li leave, he wryly smiled and said, "Brother Lu, it seems we've made a misjudgement. Fellow Daoist Han's abilities are miraculously profound. His strength is far beyond ours."

A trace of admiration appeared on the bald man's face. "That's right. Although his cultivation is at early Nascent Soul stage, with that golden lightning and blue flames, he could beat back even mid Nascent Soul stage cultivators."

Old Man Ma smiled and said, "However, this matter turned out for the better for us. With such a powerful ally, we will have nothing to fear from the invading spell warriors."

"That makes sense." The bald man nodded, but soon he frowned and said, "However, while I haven't heard of this blue flame before, I've faintly heard of golden lightning before, but I can't recall what it is. Does Brother Ma have an idea?"

The old man pondered for a moment and felt a faint chill. “None. This was also the first time I’ve ever seen golden lightning. This technique is so incisive, even a nearly incorporeal Nascent Soul was unable to escape it.”

“Let’s leave it be. Regardless of what great abilities Fellow Daoist Han cultivate, it is a fortunate matter for us.” The bald man frowned as if unwilling to speak further of the matter and said, “We still must talk about the matters for tomorrow.”

Old Man Ma was stunned and bafflingly asked, “What do you mean by tomorrow’s matters?”

A cold glint appeared in the bald man’s eyes and he sinisterly said, “Since the Moulan set off a spy to break the formation, why don’t we beat them at their own game?”

Something immediately came to Old Man Ma’s mind, “Brother Lu, you mean...”

“It’s quite simple. We...”

Old Man Ma and the old man suddenly spoke in a whisper, their voices faintly echoing throughout the hall.

A short moment later, the bald man wildly laughed as if rejoicing at the brilliance of his own plan.

On noon of the second day just as the burning sun rose to the center of the sky, the beats of rumbling war drums traveled through the air. The spell warrior army gradually made their way from across the horizon, this time bringing along a huge monster at the center of their ranks.

From a single glance it seemed to be a huge rhino that was enlarged by several tens of times. At the top of its nose was a lustrous blue horn that was over three meters long. The beast’s extremely huge body was covered in a layer of glowing black battle armor that had talisman characters floating above it. It appeared extremely precious.

Not to mention its huge size, its four feet seemed to be treading entirely on blue clouds in an extremely nimble display. It didn't appear clumsy in the slightest.

In addition, there was a woman sitting on the beast, a beauty in her prime — her feet bare and her appearance delicate — but there was an hostile aura faintly emitted from her eyes as her cold gaze wandered around. She wore simple and short dark green robes.

Ku Yao and the shriveled spell warrior were closely following at the side of the huge beast as if paying respect to the woman.

“Yi!” Before they grew close to the Yellow Dragon Mountains, the green-clothed woman yelped in astonishment.

Ku Yao couldn't help but ask, “What? Has Master Le discovered something?”

An odd expression appeared on her expression and she slowly said, “Yes, there is something strange.”

“Could there be a change in plans? Has that person failed?” The shriveled spell warrior grew still and worry appeared on his face.

“No necessarily. You two should go and take a look.” The woman indifferently said. Soon after, she closed her eyes and remained silent.

The shriveled spell warrior and Ku Yao looked at other and bafflingly spread their spiritual sense forward. Soon, the two wore astonished expressions.

With great amazement, Ku Yao bafflingly said, “What's going on? The mist has already scattered. Didn't we discuss that the restriction was supposed to break halfway through the attack so that we can exterminate all the cultivators? What happened for the restriction to suddenly disappear?

The shriveled spell warrior hesitantly said, “I don't know. First, let's advance and take a proper look before we decide what to do.”

With that discussed, the woman on the huge beast remained silent. As a result, the spell warrior army continued forward. However, the warnings of the shriveled spell warrior made sure that their army was especially vigilant.

Nothing out of the ordinary occurred when the spell warrior army finished making their way over the short distance to where they were yesterday.

The endless sea of dark green mist no longer existed, only to reveal the mountains and their various jade platforms on each mountaintop.

However, the fine and exquisite structures were now ruined and scorched black, with a few of them releasing smoke. With the addition of the silence looming over the mountain range and the lack of any other people, it made for a miserable sight.

The spell warrior army split into two as the green-robed woman slowly moved her beast forward. They glanced at the beautiful figure on the huge beast with respect and kept silence rather than show their ordinary display of restlessness. Ku Yao and the shriveled spell warrior followed after her.

The woman glanced at the scene before her with bright wandering eyes. After a moment of silence, she brushed her hair back and a cold smile appeared on her face.

The shriveled spell warrior bewilderedly said, “It’s no good. Although the mist has stopped, there are still restrictions present that are blocking my spiritual sense from looking any further.

Ku Yao puzzlingly said, “That’s right. What we’re seeing currently is possibly only an illusion. If that person has truly succeeded, he should’ve joined us by now.”

With a cold voice, the woman said, “Then you mean to say that we will simply stand here and do nothing?”

“Of course not,” the shriveled spell warrior explained, “We will

only need to be more careful. It is possible that person had only succeeded in part and had escaped after being detached. As a result, the other cultivators must've abandoned this place and made a retreat.”

# Chapter 739: Battle to Break the Formation (1)

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The green-robed woman smiled with indifference. “Such a wild guess is pointless. Considering the enemies’ cultivation, we have a very high certainty of victory. However, we cannot be careless. A miscalculation could lead to death or capture.”

Ku Yao hesitantly said, “Then, Sage Le means...”

The woman calmly said, “Regardless of whether or not this is a trap, we’ve come to break the formation. Let’s move in accordance to our original location. It will be worth it to sacrifice a few men to gain an understanding of the true situation, as our most crucial resource is time. We’ve acquired information that the other powers of the Heavenly South are jointly sending reinforcements. It will take two to three months for them to arrive. We must charge our main forces towards Soaring Heavens City for the best opportunity to capture the city. If we allow the Nine Nations Union and the other powers to first join together, we will lose far too much strength even if we won the battle against them.”

“Then let us do as Sage Le proposes.” The shriveled spell warrior hesitated before agreeing. As for Ku Yao, he didn’t particularly care about the lives of the lower grade spell warriors and offered no objections.

The woman nodded and her lips moved, sending a voice transmission to an unknown party. Then, nearly a hundred similarly dressed spell warriors slowly advanced towards the top of the Yellow Dragon Mountains under the lead of a Core Formation spell warrior.

The nearly hundred spell warriors gradually turned to black dots as they made their way through where the sea of mist originally existed towards the mountain. Their journey was unhindered as the hundred spell warriors arrived at the mountaintop without

problem, much to the shriveled spell warrior's relief. With a smile, he said to the green-robed woman, "It seems this area has truly been abandoned, let us have the others start a search. Since they were in such a hurry, they must've left much behind."

The woman coldly said, "Do not be hasty. Continue the search."

The shriveled spell warrior was startled upon hearing this and said nothing else.

At that moment, the hundred spell warriors have begun to search through a jade platform as well as a half-burned building, occasionally finding a few spirit stones and other materials. These spell warriors were beaming as they bluntly took these items as their own and placed them into each of their storage pouches.

The spell warrior army was originally comprised of different, various-sized Moulan tribes to begin with. Apart from the resources acquired from spirit stone mines and such, the rest of the spoils in the war were each their own.

When the main force outside saw this, they began to grow restless. They were extremely envious of the opportunity to acquire spoils without life-threatening battles or any hardship. Who knew how many good items were held in the buildings there.

Not long after, the shriveled man and Ku Yao were no longer able to keep still. Ku Yao hesitantly said, "Sage Le, look..."

Since a majority of the army's spell warriors came from their tribes, they naturally didn't wish for the spell warriors from their own tribes to miss this opportunity as they were always lacking cultivation materials. As for the hundred spell warriors already looting, they came from a small tribe that wasn't particularly powerful. What they already gathered should be enough for them.

The green-robed woman remained indifferent as if she hadn't heard them. Instead, she unconsciously narrowed her eyes as if puzzled about something. When Ku Yao and the shriveled spell

warrior saw this, they hesitantly glanced at each other and ceased talking.

After the time it took to finish a cup of tea, the hundred spell warriors had scavenged about a third of the mountain peak. At that moment, the woman finally said, “The two of you will each send a hundred men into the area, and destroy the remaining restrictions in passing. There is no need to sweep the entire mountain with your spiritual sense. I won’t be allowing any others to enter the mountain.”

“Yes, we will do as Sage Le commands.” Delighted, the two sent words to their own personal disciples in their respective tribes. As a result, two hundred more spell warriors entered the mountaintop and began to rummage through the buildings like ravenous wolves.

“With this much people, my magic power will not be able to hold.” Old Man Ma’s voice suddenly broke the silence in some area of the Yellow Dragon Mountains.

The bald man sighed with regret and said, “It is truly a pity that none of the Moulan grand sages entered the trap.” No long after that was said, a quake began to shake the entire mountaintop.

The three hundred spell warriors currently present were completely shocked. Without the slightest orders, they scattered in every direction. As for the three Core Formation cultivators that were leading each party, they were naturally the fastest, travelling a hundred meters in the blink of an eye. But even if they were capable of mustering further speed, they wouldn’t be able to escape the vast perimeter of the formation.

Lights of all colors suddenly shined from the mountaintop and the green mist began to return, instantly surging through the air, enveloping a vast area around the mountain in a sea of green mist once more with the Yellow Dragon Mountains as its center.

When the shriveled spell warrior and Ku Yao saw this, their

expression became unsightly and even a bit pale. As for the green-robed woman riding the huge beast, her gaze remained cold as always as well as her expression.

“What a pity.” she said with an emotionless tone, “It was a trap as expected. If we didn’t have Gu Shuangpu take action, perhaps he could’ve remained hidden and displayed an even greater effect.”

Ku Yao formed a fist with both his hands and stared into the mist. The Core Formation spell warrior that he sent inside was a direct descendant that he particularly favored. Not thinking that he would fall into a trap, he anxiously felt the need to rescue him. With eyes lit aflame, he said, “Sage Le, those inside...”

The green-robed woman glanced at Ku Yao and carelessly said, “Don’t waste your breath. With those Nascent Soul cultivators’ abilities, dealing with the Core Formation cultivators will be very easy. They are likely already dead.”

After his expression wavered, he wore a fierce expression and said, “If that’s the case, Sage Le, have me lead the charge to break the formation! I am able to release my fire spirit’s essence and destroy the formation in a single breath. Afterwards, let us incinerate the remains of each of the cultivators inside!”

The woman raised her brow and said, “Your fire spirit’s essence? That’s fine. Since you’ve already made up your mind, I will have the Giant Rhino accompany you. However, it is best that you save your fire spirit’s essence and use it during a crucial moment. We must also pay particular attention to that youth that killed Sir Heavenweep. I suspect he is also the cultivator that destroyed the body of the Heavenly Wind Tribe’s Sage Mu. If that’s the case, his abilities are great, not to mention his strange blue flames. If you aren’t careful, you’ll meet your end.”

The shriveled cultivator’s expression stirred and he revealed a trace of fear. “He’s the cultivator that slayed Sage Mu’s physical body? I heard that he was capable of the legendary lightning

movement. Is that true?"

"Sage Wen, your techniques are weakest against cultivators that are able to close the distance in combat. Take particular care of yourself to never fight with this cultivator. It'd be best if you left him to me." With a cold glint shining from her eyes, she proudly said, "I cultivate the Soft Wind Arts. Its speed should be no less than his lightning movement. Despite how deadly his devilflames and golden lightning may be, if they do not land on me, they cannot cause me harm.

As for his other abilities, he is still only an early Nascent Soul cultivator. How can he hope to compete with me."

"That is fine. Only Sage Le will be able to handle him. Against the sage that was able to rival Saintess Tianlan of the Soaring Tribe, he will certainly be outmatched." The shriveled cultivator sighed with relief at the confidence that the green-robed woman displayed.

When she heard this, she immediately grew sullen and coldly snorted. "Saintess Tianlan!"

The shriveled cultivator was alarmed by this. He suddenly recalled that Sage Le considered the battle her defeat and loathed when others mentioned the matter.

"This... really..." The shriveled cultivator muttered in an attempt to change the subject, but the woman waved her arm and restored her calm.

"Enough. We must break the formation. Cease other talks, and order the start of the assault!"

"Yes!" To the shriveled cultivator's relief, he instantly objected alongside Ku Yao.

...

In the dark mist, the corpse of a Core Formation spell warrior laid headless. Not far away, a figure flashed with azure light. Han

Li glanced at the headless corpse before raising his hand and recalled the streak of blue light from the corpse before flying off.

As Han Li calmly flew forward, he examined the spell warrior's storage pouch only to reveal disappointment. The storage pouch only possessed junk, nothing of relating to spirit techniques or anything else of value.

Han Li frowned before releasing a long sigh.

At that moment, loud war drums were beating outside the sea of green mist. Several waves of astonishing spiritual Qi fluctuated from the direction of where the drums were beating. Afterwards, a low thunderous howl shook the air and earth, causing even the mist to faintly roil.

Han Li's expression remained calm as he coldly swept his gaze around and raised his head to look above. After wearing a pensive expression for a moment, he sneered and released a scarlet-red fireball in his hand, turning the corpse nearby into ash. He then turned around and flew towards the center of the mist, disappearing without a trace.

At the center of the mist, there was a strange occurrence. All the damaged buildings had returned to becoming completely intact with cultivators occasionally scattering to various portions of the mist.

Old Man Ma and the bald man were floating about a hundred meters above the buildings. They were standing at each others side as they all gazed in the direction of the spell warrior army, their expressions grave.

# Chapter 740: Battle to Break the Formation (2)

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The bald man sighed. “I didn’t think the Moulan would be so careful. Although we killed a few of their spell warriors, we didn’t do much to harm their strength. We now can only use force against force. Brother Ma, how is your magic power holding up? You used the Concealing Heaven Flags to cover half of the mountaintop.”

Old Man Ma twirled his beard and casually said, “With the magic power I have left, I won’t be able to defeat the enemy, but I should have no problem distracting a Moulan Sage.”

The bald man solemnly said, “That’s fine. Leave the rest of the enemies for me and Fellow Daoist Han to deal with. Fellow Daoist Bu has also restored a bit of his strength. I’ve already instructed his subordinates to call for him if the situation turns dire.”

Old Man Ma used his spiritual sense to view the tremendous beast outside of the formation and wore a worried expression. “That is also fine. However, I fear that huge beast will be troublesome to deal with. We cannot afford to be distracted and I suspect our Core Formation cultivators will not be able to deal with it.”

The bald man sighed. “There is nothing we can do about the matter. We are truly lacking people. But with the Murong Brothers watching over the formation, they will be able to provide further assistance. As Core Formation cultivators that cultivate lightning techniques, they’re considerably hard to kill and should prove somewhat effective even against the beast’s rough hide.” His tone lacked confidence, having heard of the beast’s fearsomeness from a few of the defeated cultivators.

Old Man Ma nodded with a worried appearance. “That is all we’ll be able to do in advance.”

At that moment, azure light flashed from the green mist and flew around the two.

The light faded away to reveal Han Li. He smiled at the two and asked, “Fellow Daoists, it seems the Moulan are about to attack. Do you have any good plans to withstand them?”

The bald man smiled. “It is good that Brother Han has come. We were just discussing this. Preparations...” He repeated his previous plan to Han Li.

Han Li frowned for a moment before relaxing his brow, “That gigantic beast will be troublesome. This strange breed should’ve only existed during ancient times. Just how did the Moulan acquire them? Anyhow, let us do as Fellow Daoist Lu says.”

The bald man chuckled and respectfully said, “For this coming battle, we will be relying much on Brother Han’s abilities.”

Han Li stroked his nose and calmly said, “Since this matter concerns the safety of the entire Heavenly South, I naturally must strive my hardest. However, the enemy forces are truly powerful. My spirit may be willing, but my body might be too weak!”

Old Man Ma smiled and respectfully said, “If even Brother Han cannot match them, let alone us, the same could be said about the others in the alliance.”

Han Li glanced at Old Man Ma and mysteriously smiled. “Brother Ma truly overestimates me. My abilities aren’t nearly as great as you two think they are. Please don’t set your expectations too highly.”

Wishing also to deepen his friendship, the bald man chuckled and said, “Regardless of how it is said, Brother Han is by no means a common early Nascent Soul cultivator. Your abilities are far beyond ours. For this coming battle— Yi! The Moulan have begun their assault.” He quickly turned his gaze towards the instant.

Han Li and Old Man Ma quickly glanced around in alarm.

Red lights suddenly glowed in the direction of the spell warriors army. A cloud of red flame suddenly filled the sky with several tens of scorching miniature suns gathering within it.

Being the first time he had seen such a thing, Old Man Ma shouted in alarm, “What’s this?!”

The bald man sullenly explained, “This is a spell warrior spirit technique formation. With a large number of spell warriors taking the place of formation flags and plates, they are able to quickly form a spell formation spirit technique. However, a high grade spell warrior is needed to oversee the formation. From the huge fireballs, it is likely being controlled by the fire attribute spell warrior from yesterday.”

“Spirit technique formation?” Old Man Ma muttered to himself in astonishment. Although he wished to further ask about the details, he knew now was not the appropriate time and kept silent.

Han Li withdrew his gaze and calmly said, “Let us all enter the formation and act with discretion. Before we fight with the Nascent Soul-stage spell warriors, let us kill as many low grade spell warriors as possible.”

“Good!” Neither of the two offered any objections.

The bald man called for several of the other Core Formation cultivators and gave them each their instructions, all of them entering the green mist one after another, with Yingning among them. Of course, Han Li gave her a few words of warning via voice transmission before promptly disappearing from the mist.

At that moment, a portion of the spell warriors were organized into groups of several tens, each of them arranged in a profound and wondrous spell formation. They all raised a sparkling fire-red magic tool over their heads as they gathered around the fire Qi and conducted the formation.

Several tens of huge fireballs floated hundreds of meters above

them, as they surged with broiling heat. The spell warriors underneath were roasting — each of their mouths parched, their vision blurry, their bodies trembling as they bitterly supported the spirit technique formation.

At the very center of the formation of tens of fireballs, Ku Yao was sitting cross-legged with disheveled hair as six huge red banners slowly revolved around him. He remained completely motionless while his hands formed a strange incantation gesture. As for the three-meter-long fire python, it spiralled around his head while its body shined with brilliant red light, stirring clouds of fire around it.

Not far away, the green robed woman had dismounted from the huge beast and was coldly staring at Ku Yao's actions. As for the shriveled spell warrior, he was further behind them and was glancing at them with concern.

Ku Yao suddenly opened his eyes and shouted, "Go!" The six banners around him simultaneously erupted into pillars of scarlet light. At that same moment, six fireballs that spanned over forty meters in length appeared in the air.

Suddenly, the pillars of scarlet light were completely absorbed by the six fireballs, and they began to tremble for a moment before spurting out flames that were three meters tall. Then as the war drums continued to beat, the fireballs shot towards the sea of green mist like huge meteors in a single line as if wishing to forcefully open a passage through the mist.

The combined casting of these many spell warriors had condensed fireballs of extraordinary might.

As meticulously placed as the green mist grand formation may have been by the Nine Nations Union formation experts, these meteors of flame caused an earth-shattering explosion as soon as they touched the green mist. With several successive bursts of hundred meter tall flames accompanying each explosion, the green

mist was scattered by the wild flaming winds that soon followed, wiping them entirely away in an instant.

Although green and yellow formation lights still shined, they were clearly outmatched and weren't able to withstand the assault in the slightest. In the blink of an eye, six huge areas were completely devoid of mist from within the formation.

A cold glint flickered from the green-robed woman's eyes and she flipped her hand, summoning a golden circle in her hand. She then raised it in the air and it flew down to the Giant Rhino, which was already positioned at the edge of the sea of green mist.

With a loud ring, the golden circle fell onto the blue horn of the Giant Rhino and tightened in an instant. The huge horn was then sheathed and began to sparkled with dazzling light.

Perhaps spurred by the blinding golden light or some action by the green-robed woman, the Giant Rhino's eyes quickly turned blood red and it released thunderous roars. As it treaded on the blue clouds underneath it, it wildly rushed down towards the green mist.

A short moment later, the beast's roars filled the air as yellow and green light brightly glowed.

"Let's go in. Sage Ku Yao will continue to use fire spirit techniques and destroy the restrictions. We will bring this formation down." The green-robed woman's clear voice spread throughout the sky. The spell warriors on standby cheered upon receiving their orders and they began to enter the green mist while in groups ranging from five to ten.

The green-robed woman indifferently said, "Let's also head in. Once Sage Ku Yao finishes casting the technique, he will follow after us." She then glowed with white light and flew down in a streak of light. The shriveled spell warrior hastily agreed before following after her in a trail of black light.

A short moment later, there were only several hundred spell warriors that had yet to enter the restriction.

At that moment, the remaining fireballs were being absorbed by the six banner of flames surrounding Ku Yao. They then fell onto the sea of mist in an arrangement of lines at the same location as the previous six meteors, causing several tens of pillars of flames to erupt, nearly breaking apart the entirety of the restriction.

With wild roars of laughter, Ku Yao suddenly stood up and waved to the spell warriors around him. Then he wordlessly flew down towards the mist of sea in a ball of scorching flame. When the other spell warriors in the formation saw this, they flocked after him.

At that moment, there were over a thousand spell warriors in total inside the formation, not to mention the several hundred hidden spell warriors that were controlling the formation's restrictions from within.

Han Li floated motionlessly inside the mist with his eyes closed. His body was already enveloped in armor composed of the black-tainted Gold Devouring Beetles, and he was standing on a huge azure sword. Above him floated silent, three-meter-long swarms of sparkling golden beetles. They each appeared extremely malicious and blood-thirsty as if just waiting for their first opportunity to kill.

Han Li blinked several times and he slowly opened his eyes; his face wearing a trace of astonishment.

"As expected, there was a mid Nascent Soul-stage Sage amongst them, but to think that it'd be a female spell warrior." Han Li muttered to himself. After a moment more of thought, he slapped his storage pouch and summoned a set of formation tools in his hands.

Han Li's figure blurred as he quickly placed down the mightiest spell formation he could place on such short notice.

Han Li swept his sleeve and commanded, “Silvermoon, come out.”

A small fox then flew out of his sleeve and landed in front of him. Han Li continued, “I will be giving you the Purple Cloudlace, and the flower basket as well. The opponent this time seems to be even more troublesome than Wan’er’s senior martial sister. Be careful! If her abilities are truly too fearsome, we won’t need to strain ourselves. Let’s lure her here and use the green mist restrictions as well as my spell formation to even the odds. If that won’t do, then we will simply escape. There is no need for us to stake it all.”

He then summoned the Purple Cloudlace and the flower basket into his hand before tossing it to the small white fox.

# Chapter 741: Battle to Break the Formation(3)

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“Yes, Master. In that case, I will act the same as last time and stay hidden as I bide my time for an appropriate time to act.”

Han Li nodded. “That will do. Last time you acted at a very decisive moment, to much effect.”

“Many thanks for Master’s praise. This servant shall strive her hardest.” After placing away the two treasures, she smiled and disappeared from sight in a flash of silver light.

Han Li then turned to look at the distance, a stern expression appearing on his face. In a burst of azure light, he flew deep into the mist.

Not long after the spell warriors entered the mist, the remnant restrictions within it began to stir, repeatedly endangering them. Fortunately for a majority of the spell warriors, the giant rhino was clearing a path, brushing aside the restrictions without care.

Regardless whether they be fireballs, lightning, ice spikes, or boulders of earth, they didn’t harm the huge beast in the slightest. Its jet-black armor easily brushed off any of the attacks.

Paying no heed to any of the attacks, the huge rhino straightforwardly lowered its head and rushed forward. Any restrictions or obstructions that barred its path were struck through as if the beast’s body carried the momentum of a shooting star. Its destructive force cleared the mist of an area of over a hundred meters around it. As for the many spell warriors following after it, not a single one of them were harmed.

However, it was quite baffling that within the group of spell warriors, those with the greatest cultivation were the four at Core Formation stage. There wasn’t a single Nascent Soul-stage sage amongst them. It was unknown where the three Nascent Soul

sages went after they entered the green mist, nor what strange plot they had in store.

When these spell warriors saw that the area was clear of the mist, they sighed with relief. The Core Formation-stage spell warriors even gathered together to discuss their next course of action. But at that moment, two sparkling silver halberds suddenly shot out of the mist, leaving thunder in their wake as they arced with lightning.

Shocked with alarm, two of the Core Formation-stage spell warriors acted first. They immediately raised their hands and released a blue and red streak of light directly towards the halberds in an attempt to block them. But who could've thought that instead of directly confronting the spell warrior's magic treasures, they changed direction and quickly shot towards the giant rhino's head.

Although this had greatly surprised the Core Formation spell warriors, they soon grew relieved. The giant rhino's defenses weren't something that could be penetrated with ordinary magic treasures.

But soon, an astonishing scene had occurred before them. The two silver halberds didn't directly strike at the giant rhino, but instead, they flew above the beast and began to strike each other without warning. Then a huge roll of thunder sounded out as a dense bolt of lightning shot from the two halberds towards the head of the huge beast.

A blue light barrier shined from the beast's body, but it was completely scattered by the bolt of silver lightning and directly struck the jet-black armor. With a loud rumble and a flash of lightning, the giant rhino stood in place unscathed. However, the beast was enraged by the attack and loudly roared to the skies before opening its mouth and shooting out a three-meter-long spike of ice towards the silver halberds above it.

Making no attempt to stand their ground, the halberds dodged away from the ice spike before releasing another silver bolt of lightning and flying back into the mist. When the huge beast saw this, its eyes grew crimson and it chased them down without a further thought.

The Core Formation spell warriors were alarmed and hastily called out to the other spell warriors behind them, each of them intending to give chase to the huge rhino. But before they took action, various colored lights appeared from the mist, revealing over a hundred cultivators that had emerged from concealment. Then, they launched a massive assault against the Moulan spell warriors as they released their magic tools into the air.

In furious alarm, the Moulan spell warriors also sent out their magic tools and unleashed their spirit techniques, sowing chaos amongst the cultivators. With that delay, the giant rhino had already disappeared into the mist.

The Core Formation-stage spell warriors were unable to deal with this as they were locked into battle against many cultivators at a similar cultivation.

In their rage, they thought to call to the spell warriors behind them to assist them and completely wipe out the cultivations, but suddenly, the cultivators had recalled their magic tools and flew back into the mist. When the spell warriors saw this, they glanced at each other with dismay and hesitation, not knowing what they should do next.

A late Core Formation-stage old man, the leader of the bunch, pondered for a moment before calmly commanding, “We will split our vast numbers and take action separately. A majority of the restrictions nearby should’ve already been destroyed. So long as we are careful, it shouldn’t pose much of a problem. Since they’re using guerilla tactics, they shouldn’t be able to withstand a full fledge pursuit and will be smoothly exterminated.”

As for the giant rhino, the Core Formation cultivators shouldn't be able to harm it. We will find the beast after we kill them."

Then taking the lead, the old man flew into the mist pursuing a Core Formation cultivator that had fled in that direction. Soon, the other spell warriors obeyed and chaotically scattered into the mist in their own groups.

The thick mist roiled for a moment before soon growing calm, with not a single person in sight. But a short moment later, a silhouette walked out of the green mist with a calm expression and with his hands held behind his back. He was Old Man Ma. Though his complexion was somewhat pale, his eyes shined spiritedly as if he were in peak condition.

He walked out to the center of the empty area and he glanced around before suddenly revealing an odd expression. He then stared at an empty location and calmly said, "Since I've already come out, there is no need for Fellow Daoist to continue hiding. Your techniques won't be able to hide you from me."

With a cold snort, the black light flashed to reveal the tall shriveled spell warrior. "I didn't expect that your spiritual sense would still be so strong. I originally planned on giving you a pleasant surprise, but it seems things don't always go as planned."

As soon as he appeared, he twisted his hands and raised them towards Old Man Ma. In the following instant, several tens of thumb-thick black streaks shot out in a barrage towards the old man.

...

About a kilometer away from Old Man Ma and the shriveled spell warrior, the bald man was expressionlessly staring at a man across from him, Ku Yao, who was enveloped in a ball of roasting flame.

The blaze emitting from his body was so fierce that it turned the nearby mist to ash, creating clear air for a hundred meters around

him.

Ku Yao originally planned on ambushing Old Man Ma from behind and attacking him together with the shriveled spell warrior. However, he didn't expect that he would be blocked by the bald man along the way, much to his fury. He snorted and said, "You think that you'll be able to save your companion by blocking me? Sage Wen's spirit techniques are ferocious beyond your imagination."

The bald man remained still as he narrowed his eyes, "Rather than paying attention on others, wouldn't it be better if you were focusing on preserving your own life? While Fellow Daoist Ma didn't recover his strength from yesterday's battle, you must've exhausted much of your power as well. And with the addition of the great amount of strength needed to direct the spirit technique formation, you are in rather poor shape. Unless you have a heaven-defying treasure to assist you..."

He then opened his mouth and spat out a short white rod. It circled once around his body before suddenly emitting a blinding white light with a tremble. When Ku Yao saw this, his face revealed disdain. But just as he thought to launch his own attack, his expression vastly changed.

The color of the light had suddenly changed, and the white light gradually turned golden. At that same moment, a huge golden ape began to form above the short rod.

Although its stature wasn't as excessive as the giant rhino, it was twenty meters tall. Under closer inspection, the ape had four hairy ears and appeared extremely ugly and fiendish. As soon as it had appeared it thumped its chest and howled to the sky before glaring at Ku Yao across from it.

"Artifact spirit! Your magic treasure has an artifact spirit!" When Ku Yao saw this, he cried out in alarm.

Killing intent leaking from his face, the bald man formed an

incantation gesture with his hand. “Hehe! You are the first to witness my Four-Eared Golden Ape artifact spirit. You shouldn’t feel too wronged to meet your end by this.”

The huge ape’s body became more distinct and soon, the short rod grew to a hundred meters in length. Now appearing as a true demon bast, it grabbed onto the extended rod and fiercely pouched towards Ku Yao with golden light emitting from its body.

...

The green-robed woman was neither together with the shriveled spell warrior or Ku Yao. Her objective was quite simple. Using her own abilities, she would directly approach the heart of the grand formation and shatter it. With the crux of the formation shattered, the rest would soon follow. Of course, she planned to dispose of a certain cultivator along the way.

Ever since she entered the mist, she clearly sensed a faint sliver of spiritual sense coil around her. Even with her vastly powerful spiritual sense, she was unable to block it. While this did cause the woman’s heart to tremble, her desire to slay the Nascent Soul youth only grew stronger.

If she didn’t eliminate this vastly skilled cultivator, it was quite possible that he could cause great mishaps in the future. Fortunately, this cultivator seemed rather confident of his abilities and didn’t conceal himself in the slightest, wishing to draw her in, a mid Nascent Soul-stage spell warrior. She met the challenge with a sneer and directly flew towards him.

When she sensed the youth was only three hundred meters within range, the green-robed woman’s body ceased emitting white light and her flight speed slowed before coming to a full stop. Although she was confident in her own abilities, she wasn’t clear whether or not she was walking into a trap. She then slapped her storage pouch and summoned a fist-sized azure pearl into her hand.

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The azure pearl flew above her head and she struck it with a spell seal. It immediately shined with radiant light before releasing countless threads of azure light that swept past the green mist. With violent sweeps, the wind of light scattered the surrounding mist, leaving an area of three hundred meters around her entirely clear.

She spotted a youth standing a hundred meters away, silently observing her without the slightest emotion. He was Han Li who had been waiting quite a while for her.

A cold glint appeared in the woman's eyes and her bright gaze flickered. Once her spiritual sense swept her surroundings, she frowned and glanced at the sky. About a hundred meters above them, there was a cloud of silver and gold silently floating there.

When she saw the true appearance of the golden cloud, her expression vastly changed with the icy intent in her eyes only growing denser. The woman muttered, "Gold Devouring Beetles! It turned out that you were the cultivator who possessed them!"

Han Li was surprised she had recognized them, but he managed to retain his calm. "There seems to be many spell warriors amongst the Moulan that recognize these insects. I am truly surprised. Did the spell warrior who last saw me inform you?"

Rather than answer his question, she asked, "The Heavenly Wind Tribe's Sage Mu had his body destroyed by your hand?"

Betraying not the slight vigilance that grew in his heart, he flatly said, "Sage Mu? The spell warrior that pursued me with the Wind Riding Chariot? If that is the one, then yes; I am the one who destroyed his body. Were it not for his Nascent Soul fleeing so quickly, I would've been able to exterminate both spirit and body.

Could it be you wish to take vengeance on his behalf?"

Since this woman already knew of the Celestial Ice Flames and the Thunderstorm Wings, he wouldn't be able to catch her off guard, turning her into a somewhat troublesome opponent. All of his battles at Nascent Soul stage so far, barring one, had been handled by first catching his opponents off guard with the Thunderstorm Wings and later using the Celestial Ice Flames to freeze them through.

"Sage Mu's body didn't possess particularly deep cultivation, so its loss isn't anything to complain about. However, you possess many mystical abilities and are able to even control the Gold Devouring Beetles; therefore, you will not be escaping me alive." The green-clothed woman's expression sank and she quickly formed a hand incantation. With white light flashing around her, a white ribbon suddenly floated from her body as it fluttered with the wind.

She then twirled her palm and a faint yellow cauldron appeared in her hand. It was refined from some unknown wood, was four inches large, and appeared rather antiquated, with cryptic talisman characters carved on its exterior.

When Han Li's spiritual sense swept past it, his expression changed.

"Your Gold Devouring Beetles may be an exotic insect from antiquity and nurtured to a stage of invulnerability and ravenous gluttony, but it just so happens that it is capable of being restrained by wood-attribute magic treasures, like my Yellow Spirit Cauldron. In the past, I've fought against a Soaring Tribes cultivator who commanded Gold Devouring Beetles, and I sought this cauldron in preparation to deal with him when I met him again. But I didn't think that I'd first meet a Heavenly South cultivator that used them rather than him. Were this not the case, I would've found such a large number of Gold Devouring Beetles difficult to deal with, regardless of how mature they were."

Once the green-clothed woman finished speaking with a cold tone, she stroked the small cauldron with her delicate hand and caused it to magnificently shine with light. A translucent light barrier faintly appeared

When Han Li heard this, he curled his cheek and soon wore a grave expression. “There are others that use Gold Devouring Beetles?”

“You don’t know of it? Gold Devouring Beetles are the sacred insects of the Soaring Tribes, our arch-enemies. Their ancestors spent an immense amount of time before finally nurturing several tens of fully mature Gold Devouring Beetles. Only the most distinguished of their cultivators were allowed to inherit them. But ever since those times, an unknown number of spell warriors were devoured by them, becoming a target of hatred amongst the Moulan.

Since you possess so many of them, I cannot allow you to pass them down, regardless of how mature they may be.” With that said, she expressionlessly tossed the small cauldron above her.

The small cauldron circled once above her and in a flash of light, it shot a pillar light directly towards the cloud of beetles in the sky.

Han Li was dumbstruck to hear that there already existed fully mature Gold Devouring Beetles in this world, but when he heard her malicious tone, he regained his bearings and tossed the matter to the back of his mind.

His heart sank upon seeing her use the cauldron to directly attack the beetles with wood spirit Qi. With a fierce expression momentarily appearing on his face, he pointed to them and had the golden cloud disperse into countless golden petals. In the blink of an eye, the beetles could hardly be seen.

As a result, the yellow light had missed its mark. The woman was stunned, but something soon came to mind and she swept her spiritual sense into the mist nearby.

A short moment later, she frowned and an icy aura enveloped her face. “You actually commanded the Gold Devouring Beetles to attack the other spell warriors. You believe that you can afford to be distracted?” Before she even finished speaking, she had already flung her white ribbon towards Han Li.

The ribbon shined with dazzling white light as it circled in the air before transforming into a snow-white hawk that spanned about six meters in length, with eyes of flame and jet-black claws. It flapped its wings and it instantly disappeared in a flash of white light, reappearing a moment later above Han Li’s head. Then with a caw, it swooped down with its razor-sharp claws aiming at it.

The huge hawk was extremely fast. In Han Li’s alarm, he raised his hand out of instinct, shooting several ten arcs of golden lightning from his palm, forming a large golden net to meet in the incoming hawk.

When the white hawk saw this, its eyes ominously glinted and its wings trembled. The wind boomed. Countless blades of wind shot out in a dense barrage to meet the incoming net of golden lightning.

Explosions sounded out as golden and white light intertwined. Upon contact, the golden net had blocked a majority of the blades of wind, but they were too strong. The net of lightning was cut through, and several tens of wind blades shot towards Han Li with the huge hawk closely following after them.

“Yi!” Despite the astonishment betrayed from his eyes, the rest of his face remained expressionless.

He flicked his fingers, releasing over ten azure swordstreaks to meet the blades of wind. Soon after, he flipped his palm and a small blue shield appeared in his hand. With a slight tremor, the blue shield grew several times larger, extending to three meters in length. Lustrous blue light fluidly wandered from its surface as if it were truly made of liquid, making for an exceptionally odd sight.

At that moment, the azure swordstreaks had shattered the blades of wind and were about to strike the hawk. The hawk showed no fear and flapped its wings, sweeping away the azure Qi before continuing its sweep down towards the huge blue shield.

Han Li coldly snorted and pointed to the shield, causing it to shine with greater magnificence. Consequently, the hawk's claws struck an icy surface, leaving only ripples behind.

But in that instant of delay, an icy glint flashed from Han Li's eyes and he raised his hand. A black light suddenly emerged from his palm, transforming into a black-red hand that was three meters wide. It shot out at a speed greater than lightning and forcefully grabbed the huge hawk.

Woosh. Yin flames suddenly emerged from the hand and enveloped the hawk in pitch-black flames. The hawk attempted to escape its grasp as it miserably wailed and fiercely picked the hand.

Han Li grew relieved at the sight of this and turned his head towards the woman.

The woman didn't appear to mind that her hawk was captured. Instead, she was muttering an ancient incantation with a solemn expression. Upon closer inspection, Han Li wasn't able to understand it in the slightest, much to his shock.

Soon after, the woman spread out her fingers in the style of a lotus flower and white light began to flicker, forming what seemed to be a white lotus.

Although Han Li didn't know what she was planning, she was still a mid Nascent Soul-stage cultivator. Anything that took an incantation this long was certain to be powerful. He couldn't allow her to smoothly succeed.

Once that was thought, Han Li flung out his sleeve with a grave expression, summoning several tens of azure flying swords in a swarm. They then condensed together into a mist and charged

towards the green-clothed woman.

Taking advantage of this delay, Han Li raised his other arm towards the huge hand that was tightly gripping the bird. The black-red hand suddenly gripped with further force and instantly dragged the bird before him.

Without a thought, Han Li spat a sliver of blue icy flame onto the struggling bird.

Crackling, the blue flame instantly covered the bird in a layer of sparkling frost. The resulting ice sculpture captured its desperate struggle in a lifelike image.

A trace of satisfaction appeared on his face. But just when he thought to collect it, he heard a series of divine rings in front of him. Blinding white radiance suddenly erupted from the woman, covering the surrounding area of three hundred meters under a layer of white light.

Han Li inwardly cursed and hastily looked at the strange scene from across him.

The green-clothed woman had finished her incantation, but now, the white lotus had left her hand and was floating three meters above her head. It continuously unfolded its petals as it shined with dazzling light.

As for the cloud of sword Qi that he unleashed, it was stopped about forty meters away from her as it attempted its hardest to make its way towards her. It seemed to be blocked by something invisible.

Han Li unconsciously narrowed his eyes.

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It appeared the white lotus wasn't something that was created from a treasure, but was rather something that was formed from the woman's own magic power. Han Li was truly amazed that something this powerful was solely produced by a technique. However, this amazement only lasted for only a moment. He took a deep breath with a sullen expression and quickly raised his arm, cover it in a layer of faint black Qi.

The black Qi appeared alive as it continuously lashed around and grew thicker. By the time it became pitch-black, Han Li's expression grew stern. His arm quickly swelled, becoming three times as thick in the blink of an eye. Soon, a layer of dazzling crimson light began to cover the black Qi in an incredibly bizarre display.

At that moment, Han Li glanced coldly at the green-robed woman, and just as it so happened, the woman also raised her head to look at him, their eyes met. Then when her eyes saw Han Li's monstrous arm, a cold glint shined from them.

"Go!" Han Li roared and dropped his arm, releasing a semicircular mass of black-red light. Once it left his arm, it grew to the length of ten meters.

It ripped through space as remnants of light dragged behind it, instantly arriving before the white lotus.

The green-robed woman raised her brow at the sight of the Yin Devil Execution and spat out a mist of lustrous white Qi onto the lotus. In an instant, a huge lotus mirage suddenly emerged from the white lotus, enveloping both itself and the woman.

In a flash of light, the Yin Devil Execution rammed into the lotus mirage and easily cleaved into it. But after travelling ten meters

deep into the mirage, it slowed down before coming to a stop.

A trace of pride appeared on the woman's face, but soon, her expression vastly changed. At that moment, she saw Han Li fling a black object at her. As soon as it left his hand, it began to exponentially expand and overbearingly pound downwards on both woman and lotus.

"The Thousandfold Mountain!" When the woman saw this huge towering mountain, she couldn't help but shout its name. This ancient treasure was renowned amongst spell warriors. Even if a mid Nascent Soul-stage spell warrior like her were to use a secret Buddhist technique from antiquity, they wouldn't be able to receive an attack from the mountain unscathed.

The green-robed woman formed a hand incantation without a further thought, immersing the white lotus above her, the small yellow cauldron, and herself in a fusion of white light. In an instant, the air surrounding the lotus became completely still before suddenly erupting with azure radiance. The woman came into view once more.

Despite no longer being sustained by the woman's magic power, the lotus mirage grew dim and didn't immediately fade away. It managed to last for a short moment before being completely scattered by the descending mountain.

Revealing not the slightest joy from his face, Han Li muttered, "Wind Movement Technique?" He then began to inwardly curse. He didn't expect that this woman would be capable of a strange movement technique on par with his lightning movement. In this case, he wouldn't be able to harm her unless he somehow trapped her.

He had managed to come up with a plan, but he felt unsure of it. She was as skilled with her wind movement technique as he was with his Thunderstorm wings. So long as he managed to keep up with her, he was confident that he would be able to easily wound

her with the fearsomeness of the Celestial Ice Flames.

With that thought, Han Li raised his hands and pointed to the black-red light and the tens of Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords that had finally escaped their restraints. Quickly, they fiercely shot towards where the green-robed woman had appeared. Thunder then roared from behind Han Li and silver wings appeared from his back.

As for his Bluelight Shield, he waved both his arms and it quickly shrunk before flying back into Han Li's sleeve. At that same moment, the huge black-red hand relaxed its grip on the white ribbon hawk, and it streaked towards the woman in a ball of black light.

But that was not the end of his preparations. He raised his arms once more, but this time, a blue flame emerged from his palm. It crackled with a wavering blue brilliance.

Finally, Han Li took it upon himself to personally close in on her, having done what he could to restrict her movements. In a flash of silver lightning, he disappeared, leaving only rolls of thunder in his wake.

When the woman saw Han Li release so many treasures in a single display, she felt her head suddenly ache. She originally believed that this measly early Nascent Soul cultivator's power only extended to a few strange abilities. So long as these abilities were restrained, she should be able to smoothly deal with him.

But she didn't expect that in a single move, he would unleash several powerful treasures in succession. In comparison, the only treasure she released had been restrained by her opponent. As someone who was used to being revered amongst the spell warriors, this embarrassment had given rise to fury. However, the woman clearly understood that since he possessed so many treasures, it would be difficult to injure him with ordinary techniques and treasures, let alone kill him.

When she saw Han Li flap his wings and disappear in a flash of lightning, she snorted and eventually came to a decision to exhaust a bit of her strength and finish Han Li off with one of her killing moves.

Of course, she couldn't allow Han Li to easily approach her during this time. As she pondered this, the white lotus had dropped down onto her head and disappeared into her body. Just as this happened, Han Li's figure appeared about ten meters away from the woman's body in a flash of lightning.

With a blur of his body, he suddenly appeared three meters away from her and hastily extended his cackling blue palm against the yellow barrier that surrounded the woman's body.

Han Li was confident that the wood attribute barrier placed by the cauldron would be broken by the Celestial Ice Flames. And his attack smoothly succeeded. However, the woman remained still and showed no indication that she was going to use her wind evasion technique. An unease filled his heart as a shiver spread across his back.

At that moment, the woman suddenly shined with a soft white radiance as lotus petal mirages blossomed from her body. And against expectation, the faint yellow light barrier that Han Li just struck had actually managed to withstand his attack. Just as the white light and the blue flames made contact, Han Li felt his entire arm tremble.

In the instant that the white brilliance shined, the lotus petals began to sweep towards him. Although they appeared slow, he wasn't able to evade their attacks, and he could only helplessly stare as the petal struck his body.

Astonished, Han Li was struck back, a wave of pain assailing his chest.

He was launched a hundred meters away before he managed to barely stop himself, his body swaying. He glanced at the woman

with alarm as he held his hand against his chest.

He glanced up and saw the green-robed woman was now standing above a lotus that spanned ten meters wide. White lotus petals were slowly fluttering all around her, and the woman herself was coldly staring at Han Li.

The treasures he had launched to attack her, they had been easily stopped by the pedals surrounding her. They were far more powerful than the lotus mirage from before.

At that moment, Han Li suddenly felt his throat become hot and he couldn't help but spit out a mouthful of blood. He wryly smiled in his mind. He had suffered quite a bit in that exchange.

Han Li then spat out the turbulent Qi in his body and slowly moved his palm away from his chest. He glanced down at his chest to see that his robes were already shattered, revealing a tri-colored luster that laid underneath. The battle armor had a huge dent in it with thumb-sized cracks on it.

Han Li felt his breath turn cold, and the pain he felt from his chest became far sharper. With a gloomy face, he raised his head to look at the green-robed woman. As a result, he saw both astonishment and disappointment from her face when she laid her eyes on his armor.

He coldly snorted and tore away at the remnants of his robe, revealing the beetle armor in its entirety. Then in an azure flash of light, he swept his hand across the armor, and repaired it with an unbelievable speed to its original condition.

Shock appeared for just a moment on the woman's face, but her cold demeanor was soon restored as her killing intent against Han Li only grew stronger. Without further thought, she placed her palm against her chest and began to utter a cryptic incantation. A ball of azure light then flew out of her sleeve and dropped into her hand.

The light faded away to reveal an azure oil lamp of ancient and worn condition. It appeared even slightly blackened. The green-robed woman looked at the lamp with a faint reluctance to use it, but then she turned her eyes to fiercely glare at Han Li.

This scene left Han Li with a slight sense of dread. He didn't know what kind of ancient treasure this bronze lamp was, and this was the first time he ever saw a treasure lamp. Various thoughts quickly passed by his mind before he decided to fly into the sky and recall his treasures. Then with a flap of his wings he disappeared.

He reappeared in front of the frozen ribbon hawk, and bluntly took it into his hand before disappearing once more, reappearing on the border of the dense mist.

The green-robed woman's mouth dropped in amazement. Ever since she ascended to her current cultivation, she encountered many fearsome opponents that had been her match, but this was the first time she saw a high grade cultivator turn tail and run.

But when she saw Han Li take her ribbon hawk with him, she awoke from her stupor with fury. Grasping onto the lamp, she glided through the air on the white lotus, closely following him in a breeze. Afterwards, she entered the dense fog and disappeared without a trace.

Azure light flashed with each appearance of silver lightning, closely chasing after it. The sounds of thunder and wind intertwined. In an instant, Han Li lured the green-robed woman into an unfamiliar area of the formation.

It was there that Han Li stopped and glanced at the frozen ribbon hawk in his hand. With a cold chuckle, golden lightning flashed from his hand and shattered it.

# Chapter 744: Battle to Break the Formation(6)

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The ice-clad ribbon hawk shattered into pieces alongside the ice. But when the green-robed woman saw this while she was pursuing him, she coldly laughed and stamped down on the white lotus below her, causing it to scatter away the nearby mist with a wild gale.

Han Li narrowed his eyes, staring at her malicious expression. He calmly asked, “Is Fellow Daoist not heartbroken that her treasure was destroyed? Or do you believe my actions weren’t enough to destroy the treasure?” With that said, he casually glanced at the cleared air, not paying any attention to the shards of ice that were floating in the air.

“How about you tell me?” The green-robed woman pointed at Han Li. Instead, causing the countless shards of ice at Han Li’s side to shine with white light.

Han Li was stunned and immediately raised his arm, unleashing an azure mist to engulf the glowing ice. But in that moment, the ice shattered and specks of white light escaped from them, each of them flocking towards the woman. The azure mist was too late.

Seeing that his attack failed, his face grew sullen, but he stayed his hand rather than waste his effort on attacks that might have no effect.

He saw that white light was condensing in front of her, soon reaching the size of a head-sized ball. With a spell seal striking the ball, a hawk’s cry immediately sounded out from the ball in a blinding flash of white light before taking shape of the snow-white hawk from before.

When Han Li saw this, he frowned, but soon he took note of how its spirit was listless compared to before. He revealed a pensive

expression at the sight. It seemed shattering the treasure did have some effect; the hawk wasn't truly immortal. He was sure that after killing the hawk several more times, it would definitely turn to ash and scatter.

Despite seeing that the hawk had weakened, she wordlessly waved her arm and commanded it to take to the skies. It then twirled in the air before drifting back down as a white ribbon. Once it touched the woman's body, it disappeared.

With one hand holding the lamp, she brushed her hair with the other. With a detached tone, she said, "Your sudden stop must've been to infuriate me by shattering my magic treasure. It seems that this place should be your contingency plan."

Han Li grew silent for a moment before speaking with spirited eyes, "Since you already knew this and chased me, it seems you hold much confidence in the treasure in your hand. Perhaps you might tell me something of it. This is the first time I've ever seen a lantern-type ancient treasure."

The woman's face grew sullen. She said without reservation, "No, rather how about I send you off to the underworld!" She then opened her mouth and spat a ball of Nascent flame into the lantern. Specks of azure light then began to slowly rise up from it.

Han Li sighed and he swept his arms, summoning a green formation flag and a red-azure formation plate into his hands. He took a deep glance at the woman before tossing the small formation flag in the air. He quickly struck it with a small seal and hurriedly muttered an incantation.

The formation flag flashed with light, instantly causing a green mist to suddenly form. It extended a hundred meters around the sky and scattered with the wind before transforming into a forty-meter-long flood dragon of green mist.

At that same time Han Li ordered the flood dragon to attack the woman, he had the formation plate in his hand shine with

radiance. He tossed it underneath him and had it immediately transform into white mist as it disappeared further from sight. Suddenly, the seas of mist down below began to roil and release countless threads of red-azure light that shot towards the green-robed woman in a dense barrage.

He then took out a small silver bell with a wave of his sleeve. It wildly expanded in the blink of an eye and began to release silver soundwaves with a loud ring. Then with all of that done, he streaked towards the green-robed woman's head.

Since he wasn't able to grow close to the woman, he would make use of silver soundwaves to attack. Perhaps a formless attack would have some effect. Of course, against the green-robed woman's white lotus flower and the unknown bronze lamp, Han Li's killing move wasn't any of the attacks he released; rather, it was Silvermoon, who had burrowed herself earlier in the earth.

At that moment, Silvermoon had already begun to unravel the Purple Cloudlace and was standing at the center of the formation. She was waiting for when the green-clothed woman would let down her guard so she could deliver the fatal blow.

Although the green-clothed woman didn't know that there was someone lying in ambush, she turned a blind eye to the restrictions and attacks that Han Li unleashed. She only lowered her head to look at the lamp that was flickering with weak azure flames. A sneer appeared on her face.

She unhurriedly raised her arm and nimbly took out a pea-sized flame from the lantern with two of her fingers.

At that moment, the flood dragon of mist, the threads of azure-red light, and the silver soundwaves were all about the strike her. The woman didn't reveal any worry in the slightest and simply pointed to the white lotus down below her feet. White light flashed and it began to quickly revolve. Its petals contracted before instantly shrouding the woman in an impenetrable barrier.

The flood dragon of mist was the first to strike the barrier. It opened its mouth and spouted out a surging breathe of green mist. At that same moment, a white lotus petal from within the barrier lightly swept and scattered the attack.

Then the red-azure threads followed. They had also been scattered. Only the sound waves weren't blocked by the white lotus petals. They passed through the barrier, but it was unknown what effect they would have.

When Han Li saw this, he formed an incantation gesture with his hands, and the red-azure light threads ceased their attacks on the barrier. Instead, they formed a huge net and quickly layered upon themselves, blocking the white lotus from every side. As for the mist flood dragon, it surged and transformed into a large expanse of green mist, submerging the white lotus within it.

As for the silver bell, it quickly arrived before the white lotus and was controlled with Han Li's full strength. The silver soundwaves became stronger and continuously struck at the green-clothed woman through the barrier.

For a time, the green-clothed woman from within the white lotus seemed to be restrained. However, Han Li didn't appeared happy about this in the slightest; rather, he furrowed his brow at the sight.

As Han Li worried that the attacks actually made no difference, the contracted petals of the lotus immediately blossomed and spread out without the slightest warning. The petals were each razor-sharp. The surrounding mist and threads of light were completely scattered as soon as the flower unfolded.

Han Li appeared particularly grim at the sight.

The beautiful, green-robed woman was standing at the center of the white lotus with an expressionless face. She held the bronze lamp in one hand and clasped a seemingly ordinary blue flame in the other. She glanced at Han Li and then looked above him at the

silver bell that was enveloping the woman in silver soundwaves.

A harsh expression flickered from her eyes. She suddenly raised her hand and sent an ember of flame into the bronze lantern. It crackled and trembled before instantly disappearing from sight.

In the next moment, the huge silver bell was struck by an azure fireball out of nowhere, and was enveloped by it. When the woman saw this, she uttered an incantation, and had the surface of the silver bell scorched by the unknown azure devilflame.

The silver bell wailed for a moment and released silver light in an attempt to resist the flames. But after an instant, the silver bell was deformed by the silver flames and turned into molten silver. After that, the azure devilflame scattered without a trace.

Han Li's face paled at the sight of the ancient treasure being scattered. At that moment, the green-clothed woman swept her hand and picked off another azure ember from the lamp with practiced ease, and malicious glanced at Han Li.

Han Li inwardly cursed and flapped his Thunderstorm wings without another thought. He then disappeared, leaving only thunder in his place. The woman didn't mind this in the slightest and dropped the azure ember into the lantern. Just as she was about to blow spiritual Qi into it, purple light suddenly flashed beneath her and a forty meter wide purple net rush towards her from below.

As the green-clothed woman stood in place, she suddenly heard another woman's laughter before being instantly shrouded in a purple net.

A beautiful woman suddenly emerged with a yellow flash of light soon after the purple net appeared. She chuckled and said, "Since you're fond of playing with fire, how about witnessing the might of my Purple Cloudlace's Jadesun Flames?" She raised her hand. The purple net flickered with flame, covering it with a layer of azure-white flame. There were even several azure-white flame

serpents that suddenly emerged from the net and fiercely attack the white lotus. Soon, the white lotus was entirely engulfed in blue-white flame.

At that moment, Han Li appeared about forty meters away from the green-robed woman with a smile on his face. He flung out his sleeve and summoned his seventy-two Bamboo Cloudswarm swords before him. Once they swarmed into the sky, he struck them with several spell seals in quick succession.

The flying swords released a clear ring and condensed together into a twenty-meter-long sword. Thunder roared from within it as dense arcs of lightning began to shoot off from the sword, transforming the sword into one of thunder and lightning.

However, Han Li didn't stop there. He took a deep breath and he spat a thread of Celestial Ice Flame onto the sword, adding a layer of faint blue flames onto the surface of the sword.

Han Li pointed at the sword with an icy glint shining from his eyes. It trembled before cleaving directly towards the white lotus.

At that moment, the green-clothed woman finally realized what had happened. In furious alarm, she flung the azure ember above her.

# Chapter 745: Battle to Break the Formation(7)

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As soon as the azure ember left the green-robed woman's hands, it shined with blinding azure light. Afterwards, it began to revolve around her head and give rise to an astonishing display. The azure-white flames that burned on the exterior of the white lotus was overtaken by the lantern ember, and were quickly absorbed.

Once the Jadesun Flames were cleanly absorbed, the flaming ember floating above her head had stopped, and were simply shining slightly brighter.

The green-robed woman then pointed at the ember and had it flutter in the direction of Silvermoon.

Silvermoon was greatly alarmed and pointed at the Purple Cloudlace without another thought. Suddenly, the purple net brightly shined with light and a portion of it moved in front of her. At that same moment, the ancient flower basket appeared in her hand.

Then, the huge azure sword — roaring with thunder — arrived above the woman, immediately striking down at her under Han Li's command. Of course, Silvermoon conducted a joint attack at that moment. She had the flower basket envelop her body as white mist and clutched her hands in an incantation gesture, opening a large hole in the white lotus barrier in a sudden flash of purple light.

Having witnessed the astonishing pressure of the huge sword, the woman's expression changed in alarm, wearing a grave expression for the first time in this encounter. After a moment of hesitation, she ceased her attack on Silvermoon and completely concentrated her body's spiritual power into the white lotus beneath her. In an instant, the white lotus petals surrounding her increased several times in number and mirages of lotuses began to fold around her in

a dense barrier.

At that moment, she suddenly pointed at the lantern ember and had it return to flying above her head. Afterwards, the woman lifted the copper lantern in her head and waved it in front of her. A series of azure flame mirages appeared along with two flame embers. The two flame embers then flew towards the woman's head and condensed together with the original azure flame ember to form a first-sized azure fireball.

At that moment, the huge sword arrived at the lotus petal barrier. Rolls of thunder and a huge rumbling explosion sounded out as white light, golden lightning, and blue flame entwined.

While the tensome lotus petals were rather remarkable, the Divine Devilbane Lightning and the Celestial Ice Flames were also a force to be reckoned with. While they alone might not be able to overcome the lotus mirages, when combined together into the huge sword, the combined might of seventy-two Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords eventually shattered through the lotus mirages despite their greatest attempt to resist, and faded away into specks of starlight.

Unimpeded, the huge sword continued its descent, only for the blue ball of flame to unhurriedly meet it. Han Li's expression turned solemn at the sight. Although he felt some fear towards this odd azure flame, he was quite interested in measuring the might of the Celestial Ice Flame against the lantern's flame.

The impact between the huge sword and the azure fireball was completely silent. Regardless of whether it be the golden lightning or the icy flames, they were both instantly consumed by the azure flame. It then began to engulf the huge sword.

The Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords were Han Li's bonded magic treasure so it was natural for him to feel it quite closely. In the instant the azure flames completely enveloped the huge sword, he felt his mind tremble as unbearable pain and scorching heat

assailed him. His body's temperature abruptly risen; he could almost feel his blood boil.

In great alarm, Han Li instantly formed an incantation gesture and pointed to the huge sword. With that done, the sword wildly flickered, and transformed back into many small swords before scattering.

He originally believed that this would rid him of the strange flame. But when he clearly saw what happened, his expression vastly changed. All of his flying swords were simultaneously covered in burning azure flame.

Han Li's expression wavered as he felt his body's condition worsen, sweat began to profuse from his body. He gritted his teeth in astonishment and quickly cycled through several hand incantations, ordering the tens strands of spiritual sense controlling the flying swords to fly to the sky. Then in an attempt to escape the flames, they began to wildly revolve.

Having saw the silver bell melted into silver liquid, he grew even more fearful of having his own bonded magic treasure destroyed. If this were the case, his vitality and spiritual sense would suffer a great decrease.

At that moment, the destroyed lotus mirages had been replaced as more lotuses emerged from below her to restore the gap. The woman then coldly glanced at Han Li's flame-clad flying swords. The woman sneered upon seeing the swords flutter around in an attempt to extinguish the flames.

However, she didn't rush to act. She simply waited for Han Li's bonded magic treasure to be destroyed — for his cultivation to be greatly damaged. A short moment later, the woman's sneer had froze, soon to be replaced with astonishment.

The bronze lamp in her head was no common magic tool. Strictly speaking, it didn't even belong to her. It was one of the two lineage treasures that were passed down by the Moulan Tribes.

This Sage Le was able to acquire this treasure not only because of her profound cultivation, but also because she was the most powerful female spell warrior in the Moulan. Most importantly, she was the only woman who held a similar rank to the Soaring Tribe's Saintess Tianlan, and received much esteem amongst other high grade spell warriors. Even the Moulan's Three Divine Sages had to treat her with respect.

Ever since she acquired this ancient treasure, she had only used the lantern a few times due to its restrictions and peculiarities. When the treasure reached the maximum quantity of uses, it would immediately be revoked and be given to the next suitable master. The treasure was held with great importance amongst the Moulan.

However, the most important use for the bronze lantern wasn't for battle. Rather, it had a specific and extremely important use. Of course, this treasure was obviously powerful in battle, and was used by its masters to slay many formidable enemies and destroy countless treasures. Be they ancient or magic treasures, the flames were incapable of being extinguished once they were covered. Wood-attribute treasures were particularly vulnerable to the flames and would be destroyed in an instant.

But while Han Li's set of flying swords were obviously wood-attribute magic treasures, they had been enveloped in the lantern's flames for quite a while and didn't show the slightest indication of becoming ash. But in the instant that she was absorbed by her surprise, purple light suddenly flashed above her head along with the abrupt appearance of a purple cloud.

The green-robed woman was stunned and she turned her gaze to look at Silvermoon, who had used the opportunity to launch a restriction with the Purple Cloudlace. Then with a turn of her body, Silvermoon filled the air with a fragrant pink mist, covering the white lotus in the blink of an eye.

The green-robed woman snorted and glanced at the lantern in

her hand. After a moment of hesitation, she decided not to further use it and instead raised her arm, summoning a yellow jade pendant into her hand.

Just as she thought to activate the pendant and deal with Silvermoon, the pink fragrant mist was shaken and the scent grew stronger. Afterwards, countless handsome men and beautiful women began to emerge from the mist and embrace each other in an extremely bold and intimate fashion, causing the green-robed woman's complexion to grow scarlet.

"She-demon, you're courting death." The woman's complexion soon grew pale, and yellow light glowed from the jade pendant. Yellow mist enveloped her and scattered the pink mist around her. However, Silvermoon could no longer be seen.

The green-robed woman sneered. But just as she thought to seek Silvermoon out, something suddenly came to mind and she hastily glanced in Han Li's direction.

In the short amount of time that Silvermoon had bothered her, Han Li had already condensed his flying swords back into its huge form and recalled it before him. He was currently staring at it with a grave expression.

The woman was hit by another wave of shock upon seeing that the flying swords had yet to be scorched, but she was no longer about to continue staying still.

She immediately raised the bronze lantern in her head, but just as she thought whether or not she should waste another of its uses to strike down Han Li, he suddenly placed both of his hands on his chest. With one hand holding a mist of white frost and the other holding blue flickering flames, he spat a mist of azure Qi to envelop them together.

With a gust of wind, an egg-sized purple flame appeared in his hand. Han Li pointed it with his free hand and it suddenly ruptured before transforming into a small fluttering bird. It spread

its wings and charged towards the huge sword that was enveloped in the lantern's azure flames.

With a light bang, a strange scene occurred before them. The purple flame and the azure flame blazed on the surface of the huge sword. Both of the flames swayed and gave neither way to one another, giving its utmost to consume the other. For a time, neither flame had the advantage.

As Han Li observed this with a nervous expression, the green-robed woman appeared even more shocked.

What were these purple flames to not fear the flames of her lantern? Had she not seen this personally, she wouldn't have dared to believe it. But this woman soon awoke from her shock and only felt a stronger desire to kill Han Li. How could a mere early Nascent Soul cultivator possess so many heaven-defying abilities? If he were to enter mid or even late Nascent Soul stage, he could sweep through the entire Moulan Plains without a match.

With that thought, the woman's expression grew sullen and she flung the lantern in the air. It stopped about three meters above her. She then solemnly sat down.

At the moment, the woman had truly resolved herself. Even if she consumed all uses of the bronze lantern, she would slay Han Li with complete certainty.

Han Li had also taken note of the woman's actions and he felt his heart drop. He bitterly cursed in his mind before deciding to retreat. Although he still had the Purple Apex Flames and the Blood Devil Sword, there was no need for him to stake it all on this fight. The woman before him was no ordinary mid Nascent Soul-stage cultivator. He was particularly unwilling to end this battle in mutual destruction.

As these thoughts stirred in Han Li's mind, a silhouette suddenly appeared in the mist and charged towards them, much to their surprise.

As the both of them were distracted, purple cloud formed from the Purple Cloudlace above the green-robed woman's head and suddenly parted and released an immensely fast streak of white that flew towards the lantern. Then in a flash of white light, the lantern was completely enveloped by the light and was fiercely dragged back towards the purple cloud.

# Chapter 746: Battle the Break the Formation(8)

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Han Li rejoiced at seeing the bronze lantern seized, much to the green-robed woman's despair. In an instant, her face paled with an expression of furious alarm. Soon after, she raised her arms, sweeping a white mist around her. The white lotus below her began to wildly revolve, producing a lotus mirage that appeared as large as a mountain.

Once the white light holding the lantern returned to the cloud, the huge lotus mirage had already launched after it in pursuit. The purple cloud then transformed into a large purple net and dropped down. In the next instant, the lotus struck the net, releasing a glow of purple and white light. Silvermoon's sweet chuckle soon followed.

After the purple net was released, the white light faded away to reveal Silvermoon. She laughed as she held onto the ancient flower basket. Its interior shined with white light as it rigidly trapped the bronze lantern. Once the green-robed woman's spiritual sense was wiped from it, it would be capable of being used by anyone.

But before Han Li could bask in his excitement, a silhouette staggered towards them and spotted both Han Li and the green-robed woman engaged in battle. The silhouette shouted to Han Li in panic, "Fellow Daoist Han, quickly run! A Moulan Divine Sage has arrived. He's already killed Fellow Daoist Lu. Hurry and run!" This silhouetted turned out to be Old Man Ma, but his hair was disheveled and one of his arms was missing.

"A Moulan Divine Sage?" Han Li felt his heart drop upon hearing this. Just as he thought to ask further of the matter, Old Man Ma flew away in a flash of white light, not daring to stay a moment longer. But at that moment, an indifferent man's voice soon arrived.

“You’re too late! I’ve already found you. You had abandoned your arm to escape calamity, but let’s see what other secret techniques you have. Surely you didn’t refine a substitution puppet out of your other arm as well? If that’s the case, I will truly hold you in admir— Yi!? Is this not the bright essence lantern? You cunning scoundrel, your courage is quite great. A little fox such as yourself dares to take a lineage treasure of the Moulan?” The words were spoken in quick succession and the speaker of the voice soon arrived before them.

A silver streak of light shot out from the sea of mist in a seemingly slow manner, but it instantly arrived before Silvermoon.

Silvermoon’s complexion grew deathly pale and she hastily waved her arm, summoning a purple net in front of her. At that same moment, she instantly took off without a further thought.

The silver streak paused for just a moment before immediately transforming into a large silver hand. It forcibly took the Purple Cloudlace in its grasp and formed a fist before striking at the air in the direction that Silvermoon had fled.

As Silvermoon flew off in a streak of yellow light, she was suddenly struck by a silver ball of light out of seemingly nowhere. With a miserable wail, her yellow light disappeared and she fell from the sky. But in her cunning, she gritted her teeth and bore through the pain, throwing the ancient flower basket towards Han Li in a streak of white light.

“You’re courting death!” The man’s voice grew furious and in a flicker of light, the silver hand split into two with one chasing the flower basket, and the other chasing after the falling Silvermoon in an attempt to crush her. The action was conducted as swiftly as a flash of lightning.

Silvermoon turned pale with fright and she hastily attempted to draw on her magic power to escape. However, silver light flashed

from her body and she found herself incapable of drawing any of her magic power. That surprise strike from before had not only heavily injured her, but it had placed a simple restriction on her body. Although it could be easily broken, she was caught by surprise and didn't have the time to dispel it.

The huge silver hand approached her with the momentum of a falling mountain, and she felt her heart tremble. She could only shut her eyes as she waited for death, but at that moment, she heard thunder roar behind her. With an arm holding her by the waist, she had somehow escaped from the silver hand's grasp.

"We're going!" Han Li made a clear appearance before disappearing from sight with Silvermoon in tow. The huge silver hand had missed its mark by just a sliver.

In the next moment, Han Li appeared a hundred meters away at the edge of the mist with a sullen expression. He carried Silvermoon in one hand, and the huge sword blazing with azure and purple flames in the other.

"Yi! Lightning movement!" An astonished voice came from the huge silver hand. As for the other hand, it returned with the flower basket in its grasp. The two silver hands then combined together in a brilliant glow of light, disappearing to reveal a middle-aged spell warrior in scholar robes. He held onto the Purple Cloudlace with one hand, and he grabbed the ancient flower basket with the other. He was examining Han Li in the distance with a calm expression.

When Old Man Ma had seen this person appear, his face became deathly pale, and despite the light that continuously pulsed from his body, he didn't dare to flee.

Han Li's gaze flickered as he carefully examined the very first late Nascent Soul-stage cultivator he had seen for the first time. Apart from the few sparse cultivators that manage to reach Deity Transformation stage, late Nascent Soul stage cultivators were

peak existances in the cultivation world.

At that moment, the middle-aged spell warrior glanced around and spotted the green-robed woman surnamed Le. With a wave of his hand, he tossed the ancient flower basket containing the bronze lantern towards her.

“Many thanks for Divine Sage Zhong’s assistance. Had Brother Zhong not come...” The green-robed woman was delighted that she managed to regain possession of the bronze lamp and felt immense relief. Even as arrogant and cold as she may be, she was facing one of the three Moulan Divine Sages, and she didn’t dare to offend him in the slightest.

The scholarly middle-aged man calmly said, “It’s nothing. I’ve simply heard that the Heavenly South cultivators were sending reinforcements towards this grand formation. After hearing about Heavenweep’s death, I grew somewhat worried and came over to take a look. It’d be best to give those from the State of Great Jin a reasonable explanation as we are currently intertwined with them. But since our enemy is capable of using lightning movement, it is no wonder even Sage Le has a problem dealing with him.”

Afterwards, he turned to look at Han Li and asked, “That small fox is yours? It is quite courageous to dare to act against our Moulan’s lineage treasure. Since you’re her master, then I’d best deal with the both of you.”

Han Li narrowed his eyes and took a deep breath. He snorted and icily replied, “Your tone is quite arrogant, but even if we didn’t touch that lantern, would you still let us go free? I don’t know if you have the skill to take my life.”

When the scholarly man heard this, his gaze swept past the huge sword in Han Li’s hand. His face revealed astonishment upon seeing the azure and purple flames tangle against one another, but soon, he chuckled as if he hadn’t seen it. “It has been many years since a cultivator dared to say that in front of me. Sage Le, I’ll hand

that one-armed cultivator over there to you. As for our young friend capable of lightning movement, I'll be personally dealing with him. Let's see just how long he can last."

Ruthless intent revealed from the man's face as his body suddenly blurred and silver light flashed from both his sides. Suddenly, two exact replicas of the scholarly man appeared at his side with the exact same clothes and face. They both stared at Han Li as if he were already dead.

Han Li felt his breath run cold. He quickly swept his spiritual sense and couldn't find any difference between the two incarnations and the original. Be it their aura of cultivation or appearance, they were completely the same. Despite the dread he felt in his heart, Han Li patted Silvermoon's shoulder and quickly whispered something to her.

Silvermoon obediently nodded. Having already dispelled the restriction on her body, she returned to the form of a small fox in a flash of white light and swiftly entered Han Li's sleeve.

At that moment, the three scholarly men swept their sleeves and slowly made their way towards Han Li. Their movements clearly appeared relaxed, but in a matter of only three steps, they had already arrived only thirty meters away from Han Li.

With a vastly changed expression, Han Li flapped his wings without another moment of thought and disappeared from sight.

"You want to leave, but where can you run?" The middle of the three scholarly men said with a chuckle. Afterwards, the three of them flickered with silver light, and pursued him with a relaxed stride. With two steps taken in the air, the three of them also disappeared.

When the pale Old Man Ma saw this, he suddenly lept away at great speed, wordlessly transforming into a streak of white light as he tore through the skies.

The green-robed woman sneered at the sight of this and formed an incantation gesture with her hands before chasing after him in a breeze of wind. She no longer had any worry of Han Li, knowing that a Divine Sage was chasing after him. Additionally, this old cultivator wasn't capable of lightning movement, so he definitely wouldn't be able to escape her. As for the grand formation in the area, it was hardly effective against a Nascent Soul cultivator. Its restrictions were easily swept away.

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In a empty wilderness with a darkened sky, claps of thunder echoed through the air with flashes of silver light, each flash revealing the figure of a distraught Han Li. He was hurriedly glancing behind him with an expression of resentment.

"Silvermoon, how many days have we fled?"

Silvermoon's voice worriedly spoke in Han Li's mind, "It should be about four days already. If master rests for more than a few minutes, this late Nascent Soul-stage cultivator will immediately catch up. Is there truly no way to escape his spiritual sense mark? This is far too dangerous. Although you have the Myriad Year Spirit Milk to restore your magic power, you've almost exhausted your Divine Devilbane Lightning. Without the lightning movement, you won't be able to escape his pursuit and movements. Such profound abilities are on par with instantaneous movement itself; there are hardly any differences to be said. Were it not for Master's shrewdness to completely avoid fighting and continuously flee, we would've been tangled down without a method of escape."

Han Li wryly smiled and resentfully said, "The trace of a late Nascent Soul-stage spiritual sense can be tracked down by a couple hundred of kilometers. Although my own spiritual sense is beyond that of a mid Nascent Soul-stage cultivator, it is still quite lacking to a true late Nascent Soul-stage cultivator. After all, I didn't learn the Great Development Technique to completion. I haven't been

able to get my hands on the last layers of the technique. Once this chase ends, I'll immediately head to the far west and find the final layers of that chant with certainty. In the past, I've never had this problem because my spiritual sense was always superior to my opponents. But now, my hands are tied and I find myself helpless in spite of whatever methods I use."

# Chapter 747: Reputation Rising

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## Chapter 747: Reputation Rising

Silvermoon worriedly muttered, “Then how about Master use Bloodshadow Evasion? In a single use, he’ll be able to traverse over fifty kilometers. Surely you’ll be able to break free of his spiritual sense tracking.” Although Silvermoon hadn’t mentioned anything about Han Li saving her life, she was touched by it nonetheless, causing her tone to feel particularly concerned.

Having already considered the matter, he wryly smiled and said, “A single time won’t be enough. I’ll have to use the Bloodshadow Evasion at least two times in succession — perhaps even three — and exhaust all my remaining Divine Devilbane Lightning for a good chance at escaping. Although my magic power is slightly greater than ordinary early Nascent Soul-stage cultivators, it is still quite dangerous. Even if I come out unscathed, I will be weakened for quite a long while. Now that no other methods will work, this is the only option left.”

“Master, you—”

Han Li’s expression suddenly changed and he turned his head behind him. He gloomily snorted. “That person is grower closer to the second. I can no longer continue like this. I can only take the risk!”

When Silvermoon heard this, she chose to keep silent.

Soon after, Han Li deeply sighed and his hands quickly blurred as they formed a series of strange hand incantations. At that same moment, his body began to pulse with azure light and an astonishing spiritual pressure suddenly released from his body. He then spat a mist of scarlet blood essence from his mouth. It scattered in the air and seeped into the azure light surrounding his body, transforming it into a demonic fusion of crimson and azure light.

Soon, Han Li's hands and face became dark-red, and countless threads of crimson blood began to spurt from all over his skin, making for a frightful sight. Han Li didn't seem to mind this in the least and continued forming hand incantations at great speed. Spitting out another two mouthfuls of blood essence, Han Li became completely enveloped in a mist of blood and could hardly be seen.

At that moment, radiance began to shine from the distant sky. Three silver balls of light were slowly moving towards them. Silhouettes could be seen moving from within them. They were Divine Sage Zhong and his two incarnations. Their scholar robes fluttered as they calmly flew in Han Li's direction, however, they moved at an incredible speed in spite of their appearances. In an instant, they had already traversed a distance of over four hundred meters and could see Han Li from the naked eye.

"Yi!" One of the men wore a surprised expression, but he soon frowned.

The azure-crimson blood mist suddenly bursted with dazzling crimson light. As Han Li stood in place, he coldly glanced at the incoming Moulan Divine Sage before unfolding the Thunderstorm Wings behind his back. In the following moment, space itself warped around him, and Han Li's figure blurred from sight.

A sharp ear-piercing shriek faded into the distance as suddenly as it had appeared.

The three scholarly men simultaneously wore a face of astonishment and the three glanced at one another before joining together with the man at the center. With a flash of silver light, the three men then returned into one. He immediately shut his eyes and released his spiritual sense in the direction that shriek had traveled in.

The scholarly man glanced where Han Li had disappeared and revealed a trace of surprise. "What kind of movement technique

can travel fifty kilometers in an instant? It seems similar to the Devil Dao's blood movement, but the distance is astonishing."

Having chased Han Li for several days, the Divine Sage had experienced quite a bit of surprise at having continuously pursued him for several days without rest.

Even if an early Nascent Soul cultivator was capable of lightning movement, their magic power should've long been exhausted, leaving them helpless to their fates — unless one possessed a heavenly treasure capable of instantly restoring one's magic power, or a secret technique that drained from one's vitality. Now that Han Li employed a strange movement technique, it appeared he hadn't shown his full strength before this.

But this was no matter, although he had already traveled fifty kilometers, Divine Sage Zhong was still tracking him with his spiritual sense. It would only be some more time before he caught up.

Just as the scholarly man through this, he narrowed his eyes, and his spiritual sense targeted Han Li once more. With a cold smirk, his body glowed with white light before setting off once more to give chase. But at that moment, the scholarly man suddenly felt Han Li's aura mysteriously disappear once more. He ceased his movements in shock.

He suddenly thought of something and hastily expanded the perimeter of his spiritual sense by twofold before spotting Han Li once more. Yet before he could set off once more, Han Li's aura disappeared yet again. This time, the scholarly man simply stood in place with a face of amazement.

Although his spiritual sense was vastly powerful, it could only reach a distance of a little over a hundred kilometers. He could forcibly stretch his spiritual sense to acquire an approximate understanding of the environment, but it was beyond him to track someone at that distance. Of course, unless something impossible

occurred — like Han Li waiting in place for him to sweep his spiritual sense past him.

Han Li was a truly cunning opponent. The moment he felt the Divine Sage's spiritual sense speed past him, he employed that strange movement technique several times in succession and slipped away. This was perhaps the first time in many years since the scholarly man had ever been played around with in this manner.

He was a magnificent Moulan Divine Sage. Once it became known that an early Nascent Soul cultivator was able to escape him, his reputation would be greatly tarnished. However, he didn't have any intention to immediately continue the chase. Without any spiritual sense tracking along with Han Li's strange techniques, it would be difficult to track Han Li down again — even with the use of secret techniques. Not to mention that he had already wasted several days chasing Han Li down. He couldn't continue the pursuit, especially given the uncertainty of success.

After all, since he — a Divine Sage — had made an appearance, the other late Nascent Soul-stage cultivators in the Heavenly South could no longer remain idle. He needed to return and join with the other Moulan Divine Sages in preparation. If they were jointly attacked by enemy late Nascent Soul-stage cultivators, it would be extremely dangerous.

After pondering for a long while with a restless state of mind, his face grew sullen and he flew back in the direction from where he came. In the blink of silver light, he disappeared from sight.

In an area a hundred-fifty kilometers away, Han Li was flying through the sky in a streak of azure light in a different direction from before. He was continuously taking out medicine bottles from all over his body and pouring whatever vitality healing medicine he had down his throat. His complexion was deathly pale and his eyes were listless.

Silvermoon's voice echoed through Han Li's mind, "Master, are you alright?" Using the Bloodshadow Evasion three times in succession was truly dangerous. Were it not for the many medicine pills master had taken along the way, the third use of the technique would've..."

"It's nothing. Although I've lost much blood essence, fortunately, I refined a few medicine pills in the past. So long as I consume them and properly rest for a few months, my cultivation should be fully restored." Han Li slowly replied with an exhausted voice.

Having heard this, Silvermoon sighed and hesitantly asked, "Will you be returning to Soaring Skies City?"

With a tone of helplessness, Han Li said, "Of course not. With a situation this dire, I must at least restore my cultivation before heading back to the Nine Nations Union. Otherwise, the Ghost Spirit Sect and whatever other enemies I have will be able to easily plot against me. I cannot brave such risks. Fortunately, I don't need to seek out an area with spirit veins, given the efficacy of the medicine pills alone. I simply need to find an uninhabited area and rest for a while. Furthermore, the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords are still tainted by the azure lantern flames. Although I've used the Purple Apex Flames to forcibly restrain them, I must think of a method to remove the azure flames entirely or there will be later consequences."

Silvermoon smiled and said, "That bronze lantern was a lineage treasure belonging to the Moulan Tribes, so it should have some closeness to the Ghost Dao. This servant is confident that so long as Master spends some time, he will be able to refine those flames entirely. Regardless of what is said, the Purple Apex Flames possess truly remarkable abilities."

Han Li bitterly smiled and calmly replied, "With how things played out, these problems can only be solved slowly in the end." Afterwards, Han Li spoke no more and used the remaining spiritual power in his body to urge the light around him to fly

faster.

After flying for a day, Han Li ceased his flight and dropped down to an unremarkable valley. The Moulan Divine Sage should be unwilling to search this far away.

He glanced around several times and found two suitable barren hills. Not only were they completely lacking any spiritual power, but they were also completely bare and inseparable from the other hills in the area.

Han Li cautiously swept his spiritual sense past a fifty kilometer radius. Finding that there were no cultivators or spell warriors nearby, he felt safe and released Silvermoon.

The small silver fox then obeyed Han Li's orders without any objections and twirled around, sweeping a yellow light around her and enveloping Han Li within it. In a flash of light, she brought Han Li directly with her into the side of the hill.

The valley became desolate once more.

With Han Li brought to the center of the mountain through Silvermoon's earth movement technique, azure sword Qi was shot out in a dense barrage, quickly carving out a crude, ten-meter-wide room. In a blur, Han Li entered it and promptly sat down cross-legged.

Not long after, Han Li opened his eyes and azure light began to revolve around him. Over ten medicine bottles of various sizes laid before him. He needed to first refine the medicine pills he had taken before he dared to take any more medicine. As such, he calmly secluded himself as he restored his vitality.

However, Han Li didn't anticipate that the damage to his vitality would be far greater than he had predicted. The amount of time he would need to recover would be much longer. As time dryly passed by, he meditated and focused on recovering with the aid of medicine pills.

After around half a year slowly passing by, Han Li still remained within the center of the mountain. However, countless changes began to surge around the world. A battle to the death between cultivators and spell warriors was just off the horizon.

And beyond Han Li's knowledge, his fame as the Drifting Cloud Sect's Elder Han had spread widely not only throughout the cultivators of the Heavenly South, but also through the ranks of the spell warriors. Whenever they heard of his name, none dared to hold him in contempt. His repute of matching a mid Nascent Soul-stage cultivator was already well known.

# Chapter 748: Return

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Ever since the battle at the Yellow Dragon Mountains, the three Moulan Sages had taken the initiative to lead the war effort. In only half a month, they had already managed to push all the way towards Soaring Heavens City.

Caught unprepared, the Nine Nations Union could only stand alone against the incoming enemies.

Fortunately, the grand elder of the Nine Nations Union, Wei Wuya — one of the three great cultivators in the Heavenly South — had recently received word to hurry to the city. Relying on the city's grand formation, he was able to support it for an entire month against the spell warriors armies.

However, the city faced the combined might of three Divine Sages, a few black-robed cultivators, and eight giant beasts. As such, it didn't take long for the grand formation to be destroyed and for Soaring Heavens City to fall to the hands of spell warriors. But fortunately for the Nine Nations Union, a majority of their forces in the city had already withdrew to the neighboring countries of Yu and Beiliang.

At that time, reinforcements from the Righteous and Devil Dao as well as those from the Heavenly Dao Alliance had arrived.

With the four united superpowers of the Heavenly South, they managed to temporarily hold back the Moulan vanguard after a few small scale battles. However, it was clear that none of these battles were a true battle to the death.

Once Soaring Heavens City was seized by the Moulan, it immediately became the first stronghold in the Heavenly South for the spell warriors. An unending stream of Moulan spell warriors began to stream in from the Moulan Plains in great number.

Each of the Moulan tribes sent their elite to the other tribes in

hopes they would be able to occupy the Heavenly South, apart from the greatest Moulan Tribe — the Golden Sun Tribe who were occupied with monitoring the movements of the Soaring Tribes in the Moulan Plains.

Once the Moulan finished gathering together, they would begin conducting battles to the death.

Of course, the Heavenly South wasn't about to accept this occupation without resistance.

In addition to the forces of the four superpowers, unaffiliated sects also sent men and even a few vagrant cultivators participated in the war effort, all knowing just how important the coming battle was. Even the various clans in the Heavenly South took the initiative to send their own forces to support the war.

With these forces taking in, the four superpowers immediately moved towards the border of the the State of Beiliang and the State of Yu. Through the use of grand techniques, they were able to construct a huge stone city overnight, treating it as a fortress to resist the spell warriors advance.

During that time, they also made arrangements for the various sect and vagrant cultivators in their armies so that they may drive away the Moulan from the Heavenly South in a single move.

Like the calm before the storm, battles between both sides ceased, and they made use of this opportunity for further preparations.

And during this time, Han Li's feats during his time at the Yellow Dragon Mountains had already begun to spread.

Of course, he couldn't have known that in addition to himself, Old Man Ma had also survived from the battle that day. However, in the face of the green-robed woman's wind movement techniques, he could only abandon his mortal body and flee back to the Nine Nations Union only with his Nascent Soul.

As for Core Formation cultivators, Yingning and the Murong Brothers had both survived. Once they saw the battle was lost, they all took the initiative to flee.

With these survivors, Han Li's feat of killing the black-robed Nascent Soul cultivator in an instant became known by others, and his reputation soared!

As for the Controlling Spirit Sect spy— Gu Shuangpu — his true identity was only known by a select few high grade cultivators amongst the superpowers. It was not widely spread.

Of course, what truly made Han Li's reputation soar was the news that he managed to escape from the grasp of a Moulan Divine Sage. When Divine Sage Zhong had returned to the spell warrior army, his failure to kill Han Li had caused quite a commotion amongst the spell warriors.

The scholarly man as a result had given Han Li a very high assessment in order to save face and avoid embarrassment, rating his abilities slightly beyond that of a mid Nascent Soul-stage cultivator.

Naturally, none doubted the assessment of a Divine Sage.

With the addition of the many abilities Han Li displayed in his battle with the green-robed woman surnamed Le, and his earlier victory over the Heavenly Wind Tribe's Sage Mu — resulting in the destruction of his physical body, his repute amongst the spell warrior armies were even greater than those of the Heavenly South cultivators.

Of course, this information eventually made its way to the Heavenly South and had caused quite a ruckus as well.

Needless to say, many other obscure Nascent Soul cultivators had also made a name for themselves in that way. After all, a cultivator's true abilities could only be truly measured in battle.

Eventually, over half a year had passed, and Han Li had finally

emerged from his seclusion in a valley in the State of Yu.

...

Feng Tuo was a Foundation Establishment-stage spell warrior from a small Moulan Tribe. Although he was worshiped as an Immortal master amongst his people, he was now merely a common foot soldier in Soaring Heavens City.

He was currently stationed on a fortress on the border of the State of Beiliang. He had to patrol an area of over a hundred of kilometers with a party of Qi Condensation spell warriors in between the fortress and the city to warn of any sudden attacks by the Heavenly South cultivators.

After patrolling for about half a day, it was about time for him to be relieved by another spell warrior. Once he patrolled a few tens more kilometers, he would be able to return.

Feng Tuo pondered for a moment, thinking about the tens of spirit stones he had received in the past two days. With those spirit stones, he felt confident he would be able to breakthrough the bottleneck to mid Foundation Establishment stage. He couldn't help but feel an impatience to return to cultivating and become stronger before the next battle. If he would be able to acquire a few merits in the upcoming battle, he would surely be rewarded with an appropriate number of spirit stones.

This spell warrior was indulging in fantasy as he slowly flew on his magic tool, guiding a party of Qi Condensation-stage spell warriors.

At that moment, he happened to fly across an ordinary cliff that few ever visited. When he thought to brush through the area, he suddenly saw a flash of azure light emerge from the rock, revealing an azure-robed youth that appeared to be in his early twenties.

The youth glanced at the party of spell warriors with a cold, emotionless expression.

When Feng Tuo clearly saw this youth, he swept his spiritual sense past him and felt his breath turn cold. “Heavenly South cultivator! He’s at least Core Formation stage. I cannot see the depth of his cultivation.”

“Quickly, withdraw! This person isn’t someone we can handle!”

Feng Tuo acted rather keenly and hastily called for his six low grade party members to retreat. He then tossed an exquisite spirit beast pouch through the air.

At that same moment, a streak of red light shot out of the pouch and spun in the air before shooting in the direction of the fortress.

At that moment, a beautiful white-clothed woman appeared in a flash of white light. Red light suddenly appeared near her and she chuckled before spitting out a fragrant pink mist and forming a barrier around the streak of red light.

With a clear cry, the red light faded away to reveal a small red bird floating in the air.

The young woman extended her hand and had the small bird fly into it.

Having seen this, Feng Tuo felt his heart drop. Unable to look after the others, he quickly formed a hand incantation and had his body glow with yellow light and instantly shot several kilometers away by using a life saving technique.

But at that moment, the youth narrowed his eyes and snorted.

The sound was ordinary as it could be, but when Feng Tuo heard this, he felt his ears ring and his mind grow dark as he felt the very earth twirl around him.

The other Qi Condensation-stage cultivators didn’t fare any better either. In the instant the youth infused magic power with his snort, the spell warriors dropped to the ground in succession.

As for Feng Tuo, the young woman arrived by his side in a blur

and lifted him into the air by his neck.

Once she landed in front of him, she sweetly smiled at the youth and said, “Master, this person is their leader. He should know a bit more.”

Needless to say, these two were Han Li and Silvermoon who had discovered that the State of Yu had fallen during their time in seclusion. They already had a rough understanding of what had happened. He already had Silvermoon sneak into the nearby area and gather some information.

Just as he was passing through this area, he discovered Feng Tuo’s party patrolling nearby.

Han Li felt his heart stir and decided to capture the party of spell warriors, questioning them about the surrounding affairs and saving him the hassle of treading into any areas that may be guarded by a Divine Sage.

Combined with Silvermoon’s bewitchment techniques, Han Li’s Dreamtear Technique allowed him to easily acquire what he wanted.

Han Li greatly sighed with relief. The three Divine Sages took alternative turns guarding the border, but this span of the border was far from the fortress the Divine Sage was guarding and was being guarded by only a Moulan Sage.

With Han Li’s cultivation, he should have no problem sneaking past him.

Han Li then looked down at the captives with a frown.

In order to acquire the information as quickly as possible, Han Li had used a forceful method to extract information, resulting in a near total annihilation of their minds. Even if they woke up, they would empty husks.

With a light sigh, he turned each of the spell warriors into ash with a fireball. He then took to the skies in an azure streak of light

and took Silvermoon in tow.

...

On the border of the State of Beiliang, in a remote building in the newly constructed city of Skyfirst, Han Li's Senior Martial Brother Lu was currently talking with a few other high grade cultivators of the Heavenly South cultivators. However, he appeared absent-minded as if he were worrying about something.

Since he had already battled against the spell warrior vanguard, he could already return to the Drifting Cloud Sect. However, the sect currently only had two Nascent Soul cultivators. He couldn't allow the silver-haired old man, his senior martial brother, to lead the Drifting Cloud Sect disciples into battle, so he took the initiative to remain and look after his sect disciples.

Of course, the other reason he was unwilling to depart was because of the recently famous Drifting Cloud Sect's Elder Han. His whereabouts were still unknown. He was worried that Han Li either met mishap or perhaps found himself incapable of returning.

Nevertheless, Han Li had already proven himself capable of killing other Nascent Soul cultivators and even escaping the pursuit of a Moulan Divine Sage. Elder Lu could hardly believe Han Li was such a capable individual.

After all, others might not know this, but he personally knew that Han Li had just condensed a Nascent Soul several years ago. How was it possible that he had developed such heaven-defying abilities in such a short amount of time? Even a Moulan Divine Sage had appraised him to be a level slightly above that of a mid Nascent Soul cultivator.

Could it be that the Drifting Cloud Sect had truly collected a treasure? Was Junior Martial Brother Han a cultivation genius that appeared once in ten thousand years?

As of current, Lu Luo was sitting in the hall as he pondered about this matter, oblivious to what the others were saying.

# Chapter 749: An Adopted Sister

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A white-haired old man sitting across from Lu Luo politely asked, “Brother Lu, did you receive any information about Elder Han?” He was an early Nascent Soul cultivator by the name of Xu Changjing, an elder of the Heaven Dao Alliance’s Water Mirage Sect, and a long-time acquaintance of Lu Luo. He had arrived at Skyfirst City the day before.

After a moment of pause, Lu Luo smiled and answered, “There is no news for the time being. But it seems that Brother Xu is showing quite a bit of interest in Brother Han.”

Xu Changjing chuckled. “It is only natural. From your tone, it seems that others have also asked the same. This should come as no surprise. Before I arrived at Skyfirst City, I’ve already heard many rumors with regard to Fellow Daoist Han. Tch tch! An early Nascent Soul cultivator was actually able to escape a Moulan Divine Sage’s pursuit. This isn’t something that the likes of us are capable of. Furthermore, I’ve also heard that Fellow Daoist Han had condensed a Nascent Soul only a few years ago. If that was true, then it’d be all the more shocking.”

As the old man spoke, the other cultivators nearby glanced at each other and turned their curious eyes towards Lu Luo. They were all interested in whatever rumors related to Han Li, not to mention the hearsay that Han Li was only a newly ascended Nascent Soul cultivator — that was something they had yet to hear anyone confirm.

“That...” Lu Luo hesitated for a moment. Then having recalled that this was a fact already known to quite a few people, he honestly replied, “It is true. Junior Martial Brother Han is a newly ascended Nascent Soul cultivator.”

The entire hall began to stir. There were even a few people that gasped in surprise.

Amazed, Xu Changjing spoke with even greater admiration, “Since Elder Han possesses vast abilities at such a young age, surely he has a great chance to later rise to late Nascent Soul stage. I must congratulate Brother Lu. The Drifting Cloud Sect will soon experience an era of prosperity, and in the future, a great cultivator will be joining the ranks of our Heavenly Dao Alliance!”

The others felt mostly the same and began to speak words of praise. Lu Luo felt somewhat pleased by this, but he uttered some humble remarks nonetheless.

A middle-aged man with thick straight eyebrows frowned and said, “But Brother Lu, although Elder Han managed to escape the hands of a Divine Sage, I fear that his injuries must be severe. Why else hasn’t he appeared until now? Brother Lu should probably send some men to find him. If you are lacking hands, I am able to send some of my sect disciples to assist you.” His tone of voice seemed emotionless.

Lu Luo couldn’t help but grow tense upon hearing those words. But he soon calmly replied, “I am not too sure about his circumstances, but I am sure that he is merely recovering from his injuries in concealment.”

As someone who lived for several hundred years, Lu Luo was able to clearly see the middle-aged man’s envy. He was an elder of the number one sect in the Heavenly Dao Alliance — the Phoenix’s Cry Sect. They were the sect that had the Dao Companion cultivators that were capable of rivaling the three great cultivators of the Heavenly South. There were few other reasons why they stood at the top of the alliance.

Now that he heard that a Drifting Cloud Sect would later be able to enter late Nascent Soul stage, his mood turned for the worse. But from his expression, it appeared as if he were actually concerned, so none could say much about it.

Just as the atmosphere turned awkward, a streak of red light

suddenly entered the room, much to the surprise of those present. It circled once around before flying towards Lu Luo.

With a faceful of surprise, Lu Luo waved at the red light and it burst into a ball of flames before dropping into his hand. After he immersed his spiritual sense into it, delight appeared on his face.

“Junior Martial Brother Han entered the city. He is currently at my sect’s camp. I must take my leave.” Forcefully suppressing his excitement, he gave a brief explanation before hurriedly departing.

The others were left dumbstruck for a time after seeing him leave in a blur, each of them wearing all sorts of expressions. They didn’t expect that the legendary Elder Han would appear now.

Xu Changjing twirled his beard as he wore a pensive expression. As for the middle-aged man, he appeared calm, but if one looked closely, one could spot a trace of gloominess from his face.

Although Skyfirst City was a newly constructed city, it was where the various sects of the four superpowers stationed their forces, each faction taking up a different section of the city. As for the middle section of the city, it was public grounds where a few famous vagrant cultivators lived.

The Heavenly Dao Alliance were situated in the west section of the city, with the Drifting Cloud Sect occupying an area of about five acres in the southmost portion. Over two hundred Drifting Cloud Sect disciples occupied it, consisting of seven Core Formation cultivators and the rest being at Foundation Establishment stage — a majority of the Drifting Cloud Sect’s forces.

Han Li was currently sitting in a wooden chair at the center of the main hall in the Drifting Cloud Sect’s camp. He was holding his chin in hand as he wore a calm expression. At his side stood two Core Formation cultivators — the Fire Cloud Mountain Lord, a red-clothed old man, and the White Phoenix Mountain Lord, the woman surnamed Song. They were both waiting at his side in a

solemn and respectful manner, but complicated expressions occasionally surfaced from their faces.

At that moment, Lu Luo hurriedly rushed into the hall and spotted Han Li. He promptly beamed with joy as he approached him. “Junior Martial Brother Han, you’ve finally returned. It’s been over half a year since I’ve seen you. You’ve had me worried.”

Han Li stood up and returned the smile. “Sorry to worry you, but my vitality was injured at the time. I had no choice but to recover for a time. However, I heard news that Soaring Heavens City is no longer under our control. I was quite worried for you as well.”

“It is good that nothing bad has happened.” Lu Luo wore a relieved expression, but he then swept his gaze across the hall and his expression grew sullen. “Huh? Where are the other Martial Nephews? Why haven’t they greeted you?”

The red-clothed old man respectfully answered, “Reporting to Martial Uncle, the others are on rotation today.”

Lu Luo’s expression then relaxed. “Oh! So it was like that. Then it can’t be helped.”

At that moment, Han Li said with a smile, “When I returned, I discovered that I had become quite famous. Could you tell me something about the rumors? There seem to be many of them.” On his return, he was quite surprised to hear many of the rumors about him.

Lu Luo chuckled. “I was just thinking of talking to you about this...” As he was about to continue, he suddenly glanced at the red-clothed old man and the woman standing at the side. “You two may leave. I am going to have a discussion with your Martial Uncle Han alone.”

The two didn’t dare to disobey and they hastily withdrew. However, when the woman surnamed Song walked out, she glanced once more at Han Li before departing. Han Li felt

somewhat puzzled by this, but he turned a blind eye to this.

Ever since the woman surnamed Song saw him, her expression had been odd as if she had something she wanted to say to him. However, she was always hesitant to do so. While this did baffle Han Li, he had no intention to take the initiative to ask about it.

Seeing that the two Martial Nephews had withdrawn, Lu Luo bitterly smiled and complained, “Junior Martial Brother, you’ve spent quite a bit of effort hiding your vast abilities from Senior Martial Brother Cheng and me. Why didn’t you tell us about them earlier?”

Han Li shook his head and helplessly said, “Senior Martial Brother Lu should know perfectly well that I condensed a Nascent Soul only a few years ago. Wouldn’t I seem boastful speaking of any great abilities?”

Lu Luo chuckled and wore a strange smile. “That’s enough. There is no need for Junior Martial Brother to be so modest. Although it was our enemies who evaluated your abilities, their assessment should be too far off. Yet, what truly surprised my Senior Martial Brother and I was how you managed to steal away that female Nascent Soul cultivator from the Masked Moon Sect. You truly have our admiration.”

Han Li’s expression stirred and he worriedly asked, “What? You’ve already seen Wan’er?”

Before Han Li and Nangong Wan departed, he had given her a jade slip, providing an ambiguous description of her identity. But when he heard Lu Luo, it seemed he already knew everything.

Seeing the worry from Han Li’s face, Lu Luo beamed and said, “That’s right! Fairy Nangong already explained everything to Senior Martial Brother Cheng. There is no need to worry about anything.”

Han Li frowned and puzzledly asked, “Senior Martial Brother Lu

means to say...?"

Lu Luo blinked before happily saying, "Ah, so Junior Martial Brother still doesn't know. Several months ago, the Masked Moon Sect suddenly spread information that Fairy Nangong had suffered inner demon backlash during cultivation and had lost her life and that her engagement to the Flowing Mind Sect's Wei Lichen was dissolved. Also, Senior Martial Brother Cheng has recognized Wan'er as his sworn sister and intends for the two of you to become Dao companions. What does Junior Martial Brother Han think?"

Han Li was dumbfounded by what he heard. "Wan'er has become a sworn sister of Senior Martial Brother Cheng?"

"That's right. It is as I said. Once we repel the spell warriors, we will openly conduct the Dao Ceremony for you two. Even if any doubts later surface, the matter will already be done. Who would dare to seek trouble from the entire Heavenly Dao Alliance? Even if Wei Wuya were to personally know of this matter, he would only be able to forcibly ignore the matter as we were war allies. Besides, you've also made quite the name for yourself. The Flowing Mind Sect and the Masked Moon Sect will likely ignore this matter."

Having heard this, Han Li grew silent and a complicated expression appeared on his face. Then with a light sigh, he slowly said, "For my matters, I have troubled my two Senior Martial Brothers greatly. I will take it to heart."

Han Li's simple words were much to the light of Lu Luo. He and his Senior Martial Brother had spent no small amount of effort to win over Han Li's feelings. With those words, it was most likely impossible for Han Li to be roped over to Yellow Maple Valley.

In a display of complete intimacy, Lu Luo continued, "Hehe! We consider Junior Martial Brother Han to be one of our own, not some outsider. Ah yes, Lady Nangong was somewhat worried when she heard you went missing and felt the need to rush here herself.

It was only through immense effort that Senior Martial Brother Cheng was able to hold her back. After all, there are many cultivators from the Flowing Mind Sect and the Masked Moon Sect here, and you've yet to officially become Dao companions. It'd be best if Fairy Nangong isn't recognized. As for Junior Martial Brother Han's concubine, I've had her escorted back to the sect, as it will be dangerous in the upcoming battle."

# Chapter 750: Conditions

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Han Li felt somewhat apprehensive at the thought of Mu Peiling and Nangong Wan meeting each other. However, he merely uttered a few words of thanks to Lu Luo.

“What does Junior Martial Brother Han plan on doing now? According to the arrangements, you no longer need to participate in any upcoming battles due to your previous service. However a few days ago, the Righteous and Devilish Dao, the Nine Nations Union, and our Heavenly Dao alliance held a meeting with regards to war countermeasures, and Junior Martial brother Han was mentioned. Since you were able to slay the black-robed spell warrior in an instant, his techniques will be certainly capable of restraining the other black-robed spell warriors. As such, they hoped Junior Martial brother would be able to participate in the battle soon to come.”

Lu Luo then revealed a hesitant expression before continuing, “The representative of the Heavenly Dao Alliance also believes that Junior Martial Brother will be a great military asset, and that it would be inexcusable if he doesn’t fight. That is...”

Somewhat to Lu Luo’s surprise, Han Li didn’t reveal any anger. Instead, he coldly smiled and asked, “I find it acceptable to continue fighting. If the Heavenly South was to be truly occupied by the Moulan, nothing good would result of it for our Drifting Cloud Sect. However, how will the previous agreement be dealt with? Surely it won’t just be waved away with solely words!”

Lu Luo bitterly smiled and said, “Of course not. With the addition of Junior Martial Brother’s merits of slaying the black-robed cultivator and ferreting out the Moulan spy, the alliance promises that it will adhere to any conditions Junior Martial Brother will raise, given that he continues to fight in the war. So long as these conditions are fulfillable, they will attempt to satisfy you as much as they can as compensation.”

Han Li's expression stirred for a moment, but he remained calm. "They are willing to compensate me? That is easy to say, but I'll need to have a discussion about these specific conditions with the person in charge."

Lu Luo smiled and said, "That is also good. I was just about to bring Junior Martial Brother to go see the acting leaders of the Heavenly Dao Alliance. So long as your conditions aren't excessive, they should be willing to agree."

Han Li smiled and slowly said, "Be at ease, Senior Martial Brother Lu. I will not attempt to overreach myself and make it difficult for you."

Seeing that Han Li understood to act within reason, he felt relieved and said, "Junior Martial Brother must be joking. There is no need to give consideration for my sake. This is a rare display of generosity from those old folks. You shouldn't hold back."

When Han Li heard this, he wore a mysterious smile and said nothing further. Afterwards, Lu Luo promptly led Han Li out of the Drifting Cloud Sect's encampment and directly head to the Heavenly Dao Union's official hall.

"Our Heavenly Dao Alliance's acting leaders are a coalition of tensome elders from various large sects. They are replaced every interval of ten years. Of course, this doesn't apply to the three founding sects of the Heavenly Dao Alliance — the Ancient Sword Sect, the Phoenix Cry Sect, and the Sailing Boundaries Study. In truth, these three sects have the most sway over the alliance."

And amongst them, the Phoenix Cry Sect is a cut above the Ancient Sword Sect and the Sailing Boundaries Study in terms of power. Surely you should know of Fellow Daoists Feng Bing and Long Han of the Phoenix Cry Sect? They are Dao companions that are capable of contending against a late Nascent Soul cultivator. It is because of these two that we are capable of rivalling the other three factions. However, only Fellow Daoist Long Han has revealed

himself as Elder Feng Bing immediately entered seclusion upon arriving at Skyfirst City. It appeared as if she was at a crucial period of cultivating some secret technique. So long as Junior Martial Brother Han has a proper discussion with the acting leaders of the alliance that are currently in the city, they should surely be agreeable. I also have to mention that Elder Long Han is currently amongst the three acting leaders in the city.” As Lu Luo walked by Han Li’s side, he gave him an explanation of the workings of the Heavenly Dao Sect.

Some of this information was new to Han Li. As such, he simply nodded as he silently listened.

The Heavenly Dao Alliance’s official hall was located in the center of the west part of the city. In a calm walk, Han Li and Lu Luo soon arrived there. It was an imposing stone hall that was surrounded by many towers.

Clearly recognizing Lu Luo, the Foundation Establishment cultivators guarding the hall respectfully saluted him. One of them stepped forward said, “Greetings Senior Lu. Which elders have you come to see? And who might this Senior be?” Their expressions grew hesitant when they saw Han Li’s unfamiliar face.

Lu Luo’s expression remained calm as he calmly said, “This is my fellow Sect Elder Han, and I’ve come to see Elder Long and the others.”

“Ah, so it was Senior Han. Please wait a moment. The elders are currently discussing something in the hall. I will report to them immediately.” The cultivator was shocked and glanced at Han Li with astonishment, his expression growing more respectful. It was clear he knew of Han Li’s reputation.

The cultivator soon took out a sound transmission talisman and whispered something into the talisman before tossing it into the air.

A short moment after it shot inside as a streak of red light, three

melodious rings rang from the hall. When the guards heard this, they immediately bowed. “Please enter, Seniors. The elders already know that you’ve arrived.”

Lu Luo nodded and boldly walked into the hall. Han Li calmly followed after him.

After passing through several corridors, Lu Luo brought Han Li into a side chamber where six Nascent Soul cultivators were currently seated. When the two walked in, all six of them glanced over. However, most of their gazes were focused on Han Li, each with an interested expression.

Each of their cultivations was unordinary, but when Han Li looked at them, his attention was caught by the middle-aged man that was sitting in the center of the room. His clothes were grey, his appearance odd, and his stature wide. His cultivation was also at the peak of mid Nascent stage, a considerable distance above ordinary mid Nascent Soul cultivators; he was just one step away from entering late Nascent Soul stage.

Han Li’s heart trembled, immediately realizing that this person was the Phoenix Cry Sect’s Long Han. With such profound cultivation, it was no wonder he was able to contend against late Nascent Soul cultivators with his wife. He had originally believed the rumors were over-exaggerated, not the other way around.

As the others remained silent, the middle-aged man beamed and stood up. With a salute, he said, “Brother Lu, this must be your sect’s Elder Han. In the past few days, we’ve heard much of your thunderous repute.”

After giving the middle-aged man an appraising glance, Han Li returned the salute and smiled. “So you must be Long Han. I too have long heard of your famous name.”

Sitting at Long Han’s side, an old man with pale complexion half-jokingly said, “If we’re speaking of reputation, recently Fellow Daoist Han is much more famous. You’ve given our Heavenly Dao

Alliance much face.”

“This Fellow Daoist is quite humorous. May I know your name?” Han Li had already taken note of the old man as he was the only mid Nascent Soul cultivator in the room apart from Long Han. He didn’t dare to slight him.

Before the old man could reply, Lu Luo rushed to introduce him. “Junior Martial Brother Han, this is Brother Kuang of the Sailing Boundaries Study. His Heavenly Earth Arts have repeatedly shaken the continent for several hundreds of years.”

Astonished, Han Li said, “So it turned out to be Brother Kuang. I’ve also held you in much admiration for a long time.”

Han Li’s words weren’t lies. This old man was truly renowned, and was second in the Heavenly Dao Union only to Long Han and his Dao companion. Of course, the Drifting Cloud Sect Elder Cheng had repeatedly mentioned them in the past, but Han Li didn’t think he would actually meet them.

Afterwards, Lu Luo introduced the other cultivators to Han Li. They weren’t particularly noteworthy apart from the Ancient Sword Sect Elder, an ugly man surnamed Tian, who Han Li particularly took notice of. With the introductions over, they all took a seat.

Long Han smiled and calmly said, “Since Fellow Daoist Han has come to visit the official hall, he should know of our wishes for him to continue fighting in the war. In truth, we did break our previous promise. But with war approaching, your abilities will prove to be of great strength for the cultivators of the Heavenly South. We have no other choice. But as compensation, we will provide you with materials, medicine pills and such for your trouble. Fellow Daoist Han, if you are still unwilling, we can further discuss this. So long as it is possible for your alliance, we will not refuse you.”

Long Han deserved his title as the cultivator who ruled the

Heavenly Dao Alliance. Before Han Li could even mention why he had come, he already took the initiative to apologize to Han Li. He would be put in a bad position if he were to reveal his objections.

However, Han Li wasn't angry to begin with. Having escaped from the hands of the Moulan Divine Sage, he had proved he should have more than enough strength to spare to preserve his life when a battle turned for the worse. Since he had no worries over his survival, he didn't have much to be unhappy about. Rather, he felt that this was a rare opportunity!

As a result, Han Li pondered for a moment before bluntly speaking, "Since Brother Long said this, I will not object to continuing to fight. After all, I do understand this war is for the survival of the Heavenly South. However, there are some things that I will require from the Heavenly Dao Alliance. Therefore, I will bluntly take advantage of this opportunity."

When Han Li said this, he appeared calm. He knew that these old eccentrics were extremely sharp, and felt that it would be easier to handle such matters directly.

As expected, his honest words left a positive impression on most of the cultivators in the room. The cultivator surnamed Kuang was particularly happy, and he honestly replied, "Fellow Daoist Han's quick and direct words are very much to my liking. Please tell us of your conditions. I am quite curious!"

Long Han's expression wavered several times before he silently smiled. As for the others, they all glanced at Han Li, wondering what it was that he wanted.

With an indifferent expression, Han Li calmly said, "It is quite simple. I hope to draw support from the alliance to help me find a certain type of tool refinement material. I won't hide this from you; this item is extremely important to me. If you are able to gather together these items for me before the grand battle, I will have more confidence in dealing with those black-robed

cultivators.”

“Tool refinement material?” Those in the room glanced at each other, none revealing surprise. They all knew of materials that were certainly precious and difficult to find. Why wouldn’t Han Li want to use this opportunity to seek them out?

# Chapter 751: A Surprise Meeting

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Lu Luo wore a pensive expression upon hearing Han Li and faintly recalled something.

Luo Han slowly asked, “What is this material? Please tell us, Fellow Daoist Han.”

“I need Auric Essence to refine my magic treasure. The more, the better. But don’t worry, I am willing to trade items of equal value for it. I will not take it for nothing.”

The alliance only needs to use their resources to help me collect the Auric Essence, or perhaps find its whereabouts.” Having been unable to acquire a large amount of Auric Essence and refine the Aureate Sword Formation, Han Li felt extremely frustrated by the matter. Now that this opportunity presented himself, he wished to use it to its fullest extent.

“Auric Essence!” Those present all revealed unconcealable shock upon hearing Han Li. This illustrious treasure known as ‘Honed Gold’ was about what they had expected, but they were stunned from hearing such a heaven-defying material, nonetheless.

Old Man Kuang frowned and wore a puzzled expression. “Fellow Daoist Han, the magic treasure you wish to temper requires such a vast amount of Auric Essence? Do you know how much a magic treasure’s power increase after only infusing a small quantity of it? And if you add too much, it won’t have any further effects.”

Han Li calmly said, “Don’t worry. I already know this. I merely wish to ask whether your alliance would be able to gather together a certain quantity of this item.”

Long Han shook his head with a sigh. “Since Fellow Daoist Han is willing to evenly trade for it, we can certainly be on the lookout for any information to help you gather together the material if we can. However, when such items are acquired, they are normally

consumed immediately. From your tone, it seems you require much of it. I fear this will be quite difficult to do. Even if information of Auric Essence exists, their masters may keep quiet on account of wishing to acquire it themselves. It will be difficult to find. That is why only such a small amount was found at the recent trade meet.”

When Han Li heard this, his heart sank. He had already considered the problem, but he had no methods of dealing with them; he was at a complete loss over the matter. If he truly couldn’t acquire a large amount of Auric Essence in the Heavenly South, he may have to travel to the rumored Jin Empire or other great continents in his search.

Since the Jin Empire was about ten times larger than the Heavenly South, perhaps he would be able to find a large amount of Auric Essence there. Not to mention that he still had the bone case he received in the Umbra Realm that contained the refinement method for the Spirit Subjugation Talisman. If he returned to the Jin Empire, he would naturally want to return it to the Heavenly Talisman Sect.

Han Li felt a wave of gloominess upon hearing this. Seeing Han Li’s hesitant expression, Lu Luo couldn’t help but console him, “Junior Martial Brother Han, let’s change the condition. Auric Essence isn’t something that can be easily sought.”

Han Li unconsciously frowned when he heard him. After a moment of thought, he shook his head and said, “Regardless, Auric Essence is extremely important to me. Even if the chances are slim, I still want the alliance to agree to this matter.” Once this was said, he wore a resolute expression.

Seeing that Han Li made up his mind, Long Han eventually nodded. “Since Fellow Daoist Han decided, I will order the alliance’s disciples to spare no effort over this matter. However, please don’t regret this decision if we aren’t able to find even a single piece of Auric Essence.”

Despite the great superpower the Heavenly Dao Alliance may be, the most it could do was order its low grade disciples around, and pay particular attention to any news that may surface. Since this matter wouldn't prove particularly draining, Old Man Kuang and the others raised no objections.

However, they also felt that this alone wasn't enough to compensate. They promptly took out a bag of over a hundred mid-grade spirit stones as well. Han Li took it with a smile.

With this resolved, a friendly atmosphere appeared in the hall.

The Heavenly Dao Alliance cultivators chatted for the time being. Eventually, detailed questions about the battle at the Yellow Dragon Mountains were being asked, particularly about the black-robed man and the Moulan Divine Sage.

With no intent to conceal this, Han Li answered their questions once through. Of course, he brushed past any mention of his techniques and treasures, and Long Han and the others didn't press him.

However, they were doubtful when they heard that the black-robed man weren't heretical demon or ghost cultivators. Long Han was particularly surprised to hear that they were merely Devil Dao cultivators.

When a half day had passed, Han Li and Lu Luo eventually took their leave.

Shortly after they departed, a voice transmission talisman suddenly shot towards Lu Luo's hand.

Lu Luo gave Han Li a helpless smile and said, "I have urgent business to attend to. I'm afraid I can't continue to keep your company. Junior Martial Brother Han should take a stroll around the city. Let us have a proper chat when night comes."

Han Li kindly smiled in response. "Senior Martial Brother Lu, please don't mind me. I also wished to go take a look at the city

alone!"

Feeling relieved, Lu Luo saluted Han Li and hastily flew off in a streak of light. The matter seemed truly important.

As Han Li watched Lu Luo depart, he shook his head, but after some thought, he smiled instead. He pondered for a moment as he looked at the sky before heading towards the city's central district.

But after taking a few steps, he stopped and slowly turned around to face Mountain Lord Song, who stood at the entrance of a nearby alley. She stood there with bit lips and a hesitant expression.

Han Li blinked and waved at the woman. With a moment more of hesitation, she walked over with lithe steps.

The beautiful woman respectfully shouted, "Junior pays her respects to Martial Uncle Han!"

"How long have you been waiting here?" Han Li looked at the woman's face with hands behind his back.

The woman lowered her head and softly replied, "It has been about an hour already."

Han Li glanced around and calmly said, "It seems you have something you wish to say to me. However, this isn't a good place to talk. Follow me." Without waiting for her reply, he began walking. The woman's expression wavered for a moment before she closely followed after him.

Once Han Li brought her to a secluded place, he turned around and said, "What is it that you wish to say?"

The woman kept silent for a moment before taking out a jade slip from her robes and handing it over to Han Li. "Someone had this Martial Niece pass on a letter to Martial Uncle. They wish to see you."

"A letter?" Han Li wore a face of surprise and swept his spiritual sense past the item. However, he didn't immediately sink his

spiritual sense into it. He stared at the woman and asked, “Who gave this to you? You must know.”

With the jade slip no longer in her hands, she managed to retain her calm. “It is a good friend of mine. She says that she knows you and wishes to pass something on to you.”

“She knows me?” Han Li narrowed his eyes and his expression stirred. After pondering with a tilted head, he eventually pressed the jade slip against his head and looked into it. A short moment later, he was wearing an odd expression on his face. “Where is she? Bring me to her.”

The woman blinked and astonishedly said, “Martial Uncle truly recognizes my friend!”

Han Li casually said, “That’s right. There is some friendship between us. I didn’t think that Martial Niece Song would know her.”

Spirits roused, she sweetly smiled and said, “I met her in only the last two years. I originally believed it to be a joke that she knew you. I didn’t think that it would be true. I’ve arranged an empty place for her outside of the city. I’ll bring you to her.”

Afterwards, Han Li and the woman walked towards the city gate one by one. After they left Skyfirst City, the woman took to the skies and led Han Li south. They traveled tens of kilometers before arriving at a small, uninhabited valley.

The entrance of the valley was enveloped in a pure white mist, concealing its interior from sight. The woman surnamed Song silently waved her hand as she grabbed onto a command talisman. The streak of red light then shot into the mist and caused it to roll away and reveal a narrow green path.

The woman respectfully stood to the side and said, “Martial Uncle, please go first!”

With Han Li’s current spiritual sense, he clearly saw everything

within the valley. He wore a slight smile on his face and walked down the path.

This exquisite valley wasn't large. It was only a mere three hundred meters in an area with nothing aside from several small buildings at its center, making it appear only as a temporary residence. Yet, it was completely clean near the buildings with not a single weed to be found.

However, someone in the room was alarmed by the formation being broken. In a blur, a gorgeous, yellow-robed woman emerged from the building.

# Chapter 752: Spirit Kindle Fruit and Nature Origin Pill

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As the woman appeared before Han Li, her name appeared in his mind. She was Mei Ning, who traveled with him from the Umbra Realm to the Heavenly South. Her beauty became more captivating over the few years he hadn't seen her.

"This Junior was only able to reach her current cultivation because of the pills that Senior gave me in the past."

At that moment, Cultivator Song walked up from behind Han Li and spoke in a familiar manner, "Little Sister Mei, is Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit inside?" This caused Han Li to look at her with slight surprise.

Not daring to neglect the two, Mei Ning wore an apologetic expression and said, "Senior Song! Elder Sister Violet Spirit is currently cultivating inside her room, but her cycle should be done soon. How about you two wait in my room for now?"

Han Li raised no objections. With his spiritual sense, he was able to see from Violet Spirit's spiritual Qi fluctuations that she was on the verge of finishing a cultivation cycle. The two then entered one of the stone buildings under Mei Ning's modest invitation and they both took a seat. Afterwards, Mei Ning quickly steeped a cup of tea for each of them.

Han Li took a sip of tea and calmly asked, "Lady Mei, where have you and Violet Spirit been cultivating these past few years? Could it be that the two of you haven't yet entered a sect?"

Standing at Han Li's side, Mei Ning lowered her head and replied, "Big Sister Violet Spirit and I had a discussion about this. We will first observe the great sects of the Heavenly South and consolidate our cultivation before deciding on a sect. As such, we've been travelling in the last few years. After all, the circumstances in the

Heavenly South are quite a bit different from our original home.”

Seeing that Mei Ning didn’t conceal that she was a foreign cultivator, Han Li came to a realization that his Martial Uncle Song most likely knew that they came from the Scattered Star Seas. It seems her relationship with Violet Spirit was quite close.

But upon seeing Mei Ning’s gentle and sincere behavior, Han Li stroked his nose and felt it awkward to continue his questions. He simply turned to look at Cultivator Song at the side and smiled. “You didn’t bring me here on behalf of Violet Spirit just so that we could reminisce about old times, right? Otherwise, there should be no need to be so secretive and hesitant about delivering the letter.”

“Martial Uncle, I...” Cultivator Song’s complexion grew slightly red and she swallowed.

Mei Ning revealed a trace of embarrassment. Just as she thought to say something, a woman suddenly laughed from outside the room. “Brother Han, there is no need to make it so difficult for these two little sisters. In truth, it was mostly my idea to invite you here.” Just after she finished speaking, Fairy Violet Spirit walked in. Her appearance was more captivating and her eyes more luminous than ever before.

“In truth, I should actually be calling Brother Han as Senior now. However, I feel that Brother Han is a more appropriate title as your age isn’t necessarily larger than mine. Brother Han certainly won’t mind.” Violet Spirit spoke with a smile. Having met her in Heavenvoid Hall and the Umbra Realm as well as the days he spent with her in the Endless Seas, Han Li felt that she was a close friend.

Han Li shot the woman an appraising glance. Despite his current cultivation at Nascent Soul stage, he felt his spirit shake upon seeing Violet Spirit’s true appearance. She was no doubt country shattering beauty from legend.

Solely with regards to beauty, even his beloved was an entirely level lower. Of course, Nangong Wan’s calm temperament and

charm belonged to a completely different category. They couldn't be compared.

"It makes no difference to me. However, if Lady Violet Spirit were to walk out of this valley with her true appearance, she will bring about chaos in the Heavenly South. If any of those old eccentrics were to see you, I fear they would attempt to take you by force." It was in the presence of this old friend that Han Li was able to say the seldom joke.

Violet Spirit smiled and gave Han Li a glance before calling out towards Cultivator Song, "I've troubled you quite a bit Big Sister Song. Mei Ning and I found it difficult to travel into Skyfirst City."

"It's nothing! Since I am also involved in this matter, exerting a bit of effort is only natural." The woman still appeared somewhat astonished. Although she knew Violet Spirit and Han Li were truly old friends, she was quite astonished to see them acting so casually with one another, and it greatly bolstered her confidence in the matter to come.

At that moment, Violet Spirit sweetly smiled at Han Li and casually said, "Every time I see Brother Han, it seems his cultivation vastly increases each time. This unknown cultivation art of yours is truly astonishing. And now, Brother Han's resounding fame has left us at a loss for words. Rumors have spread everywhere that Brother Han's strength is greater than even a mid Nascent Soul stage cultivator. Is this matter true?" Once that was said, Violet Spirit mysteriously smiled at Han Li, her eyes faintly revealing a trace of anticipation.

Han Li's heart stirred, and he pondered for a moment. Rather than offering a direct response, he calmly asked, "Lady Violet Spirit, why is the first thing you ask me is about my strength? Isn't that too impatient? Can you tell me why you sought me out first? I hope to understand this before we move onto other matters."

When she heard Han Li, she blinked and wore an embarrassed

expression. “I was impatient; it is true. However, this should come as no surprise. This matter is truly important. If you have the abilities of a mid Nascent Soul stage cultivator or greater, our plan will have a chance to succeed.”

Han Li gaze flickered and his smile disappeared. He calmly asked, “What is so important? If you need my help, you may as well ask me clearly.”

Violet Spirit’s expression grew solemn. “It seems there is no need for me to say. Brother Han had already guessed. We truly sought Fellow Daoist Han for help. But before this, I want to ask you a question. Not long before, did Fellow Daoist Han accompany a few Nascent Soul eccentrics to the Moulan Plains and acquire Master Cang Kun’s remains?”

With slight surprise, Han Li asked, “How do you know about that? This matter should only be known to few.”

Mei Ning sweetly smiled and said, “It was something we found out from a Ghost Spirit Sect cultivator. They are of direct lineage with a Ghost Spirit Sect Elder. He accidentally saw Big Sister Violet Spirit’s true appearance and became entirely captivated her. There Is nothing he won’t say.”

“Stupid girl, what nonsense are you saying?” Violet Spirit snorted and her cheeks blushed. It seemed the two had grown quite close over the years.

Han Li nodded and suspicion appeared on his face. “If the Ghost Spirit Sect is involved, this matter can’t be ordinary.”

Violet Spirit’s bright eyes flickered and she said with a sweet voice, “I didn’t expect Brother to still be so cautious after entering Nascent Soul stage.”

“I’ve only recently entered Nascent Soul stage. If I don’t want to die, I must be careful. Being careful is only natural. However, why does it matter that I head to the Moulan Plains in search for

treasures? Could it be that you acquired another secret from the Ghost Spirit Sect?” Han Li curiously asked.

Seeing that Han Li was truly familiar with Violet Spirit, Cultivator Song felt less at ease and interjected herself, “Martial Uncle is truly insightful. This matter involves a treasure inside Devilfall Valley. The Ghost Spirit Sect disciple unintentionally revealed this as we were talking about it.”

After a moment of surprise, Han Li wore an odd expression and said, “Devilfall Valley? I recall that only Master Cang Kun was able to safely leave there alive. How does the Ghost Spirit Sect know of a treasure inside it? Were you not deceived?”

Violet Spirit’s eyes shined and said, “This isn’t the case. At the time, we were curious and we joined hands to perform a charming technique. Not only did we manage to acquire the treasure’s name, but we also found out the treasure’s approximate location. As for why the Ghost Spirit Sect knows of this matter, the person in question also didn’t know. However, this matter is most likely true.”

Han Li frowned. “If this matter is true, then this must be an unordinary ancient treasure. What is this treasure that you covet so greatly?”

The three woman quickly exchanged a glance. Cultivator Song then solemnly asked, “Has Martial Uncle Han ever heard of the Spirit Kindle Fruit?”

Han Li’s calm expression was now replaced with astonishment. “What? The Spirit Kindle Fruit? If I remember correctly, the fruit itself should be extinct. However, Devilfall Valley had been sealed since times of antiquity. Perhaps it is truly inside the valley.”

“It seems Brother Han knows much about the spirit fruit. Then he should also know of the Nature Origin Pill. In legend, so long as one uses this pill, they will be able to break through any bottleneck short of Deity Transformation stage.

It is also said that cultivators who took this pill had their spiritual senses undergo a transformation and ascend to an inconceivable level. Although these rumors are unclear to the point that recorded results differ from each individual, the legend of cultivators breaking through the bottleneck was always consistent.

Despite the many records throughout the ages, they all mentioned the great name of this spirit pill. It is a pity that the main ingredient to refine it, the Spirit Kindle Fruit, was extremely difficult to find even in the age of antiquity. Although the pill formula was preserved, it remained unused for eras.”

Despite their former knowledge of this matter, Cultivator Song and Mei Ning couldn’t help but reveal excitement upon hearing it once more. Mei Ning in particular was excited about the Nature Origin pill as it would vastly increase her chances of reaching Core Formation stage.

But at that moment, Han Li’s excitement slowly faded as he pondered about the matter.

After some careful consideration, Han Li calmly replied, “If the spirit fruit is in Devilfall Valley, that explains why the Ghost Spirit Sect went through such lengths to hire those treasure seeking Nascent Soul cultivators and kill Marquis Nanlong for Master Cang Kun’s treasure. Still, there are a few things I still don’t understand that I need you to explain. I will not be braving this danger otherwise, despite how tempting the fruit may be.”

# Chapter 753: Making an Appointment

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“Brother Han, please don’t hesitate to ask about anything. As this matter is important, we cannot have anything overlooked.” Violet Spirit felt some admiration for Han Li having seen him so calm at the mention of the Nature Origin Pill.

Han Li stroked his chin and asked, “While I did make a trip to the Moulan Plains, why is it that you sought me out? The one who knows best how to enter Devilfall Valley should be Marquis Nanlong, unless you know of some other method to enter the valley?”

“I know that Marquis Nanlong holds the method to enter the valley. However, with his rumored temperament, how could I dare to have a secret discussion with him? As for Brother Han, we know you to be someone who doesn’t forget past friendships, and we feel far more at ease with you. With regards to entering the valley, that same Ghost Spirit Sect disciple told me that their sect has been researching this method for a while now and their research is growing close to completion. While this person doesn’t know the specific details, they did mention that the Ghost Spirit Sect will be certain to act the next period where the spatial tears in Devilfall Valley stabilize. If Brother Han’s cultivation isn’t enough, then let’s leave the matter be. After all, even if he safely enters the valley, who knows what calamitous dangers lie within.” Once this was said, Violet Spirit revealed a hesitant expression.

Han Li pondered to himself for a long while before sighing. “The Ghost Spirit Sect also has a way to enter the valley? This is the first time I’ve heard of this. But from your tone, it seems there isn’t much information about it. Hm, how about this? It is still a few years before Devilfall Valley’s spatial tears stabilize. Before then, make a few deeper inquiries and make certain that the information is true. If the Spirit Kindle Fruit is truly within the valley, I will take the risk. As for cultivation, you don’t need to worry about it.

If I cannot succeed, then a mid-Nascent Soul cultivator likely wouldn't be able to either."

Han Li didn't mention that Marquis Nanlong had earlier made contact with him about Devilfall Valley. Although the Spirit Kindle Fruit was truly tempting, Han Li need to further consider the matter. If the Ghost Spirit Sect's method of entering the valley was safer, he didn't need to mention Marquis Nanlong's matter to them.

Violet Spirit wasn't dejected in the least from Han Li's vague answer. Rather, she was happy about it; knowing his cautious attitude, those words were practically an agreement. Moreover, his tone may as well have confirmed the rumors to be true. With his current abilities, his chances of acquiring the Spirit Kindle Fruit will be all the better.

At that moment, she smiled and said, "In truth, the reason why we so impatiently sought out Brother Han was because we felt that if we didn't find a capable partner, this entire matter would result in nothing, and any further action would've been wasted effort. But now that Brother Han has agreed, we will feel more at ease investigating this issue."

After all, we also wish to enter the valley. We don't wish to treat our lives as a joke."

"What? You three wish to enter the valley?" When Han Li heard this, he felt his heart thump, and an expression of surprise appeared on his face.

With a bitter smile, Violet Spirit helplessly said, "Does Brother Han think we want to enter the valley? We are only doing this out of necessity. A majority of ancient books only record its marvelous effects, but there were a few records that all pointed out that the Spirit Kindle Fruit cannot survive once picked. It will need to be immediately refined in half a day. Once it exceeds that point, the fruit's medicinal power will vastly decrease, and at three days it

completely disappears. But most terrible of all is the Nature Origin Pills. If they aren't consumed shortly after they are refined, they completely lose their efficacy. As such, Devilfall Valley is something that we must force ourselves to brave. It is better than remaining stagnant in our cultivation for a hundred years, maybe even several hundreds."

Han Li frowned. "I've looked through many ancient records but not once have I heard that the Spirit Kindle Fruit had such limitations. Why have I never heard of this before?"

"Martial Uncle Han, there is an ancient book of secrets that was passed down from the ancestors of the Song Clan. I have a copy of it right here. Please take a look at it." Much to his surprise, Cultivator Song took out a jade slip from her storage pouch and respectfully offered it to Han Li. An astonished expression appeared on his face and he gave the woman a cautious glance before nodding and reading the jade slip with his spiritual sense.

This ancient book introduced pills and medicines from times of antiquity, including a few that Han Li have seen before. They even gave a detailed explanation of the Ninecurl Spirit Ginseng and included the pill formula that the Bone Sage had given him.

He found many medicine pills that were quite useful towards Nascent Soul stage cultivators. Although the pill materials were lost since times of antiquity, it was always best to be prepared in case he found some unknown spirit medicine pill in the future, else he wouldn't know what to do with them. It appeared cultivation clans still had a few good things even large cultivation sects didn't have.

Using his powerful spiritual sense, he was able to quickly find the Spirit Kindle Fruit among the many entries in the jade slip. Sure enough, he found the limitations of the Spirit Kindle Fruit and the Nature Origin Pill within. He unconsciously frowned after reading them.

A short moment later, he withdrew his spiritual sense, but rather than speaking, he rubbed the glossy surface of the jade slip and muttered to himself for a short moment.

With great tact, Cultivator Song said, “I heard Big Sister Violet Spirit mention that Martial Uncle Han obtained great attainments with regards to pill refinement. This ancient record is of little value to our Song Clan. Although there are many ancient pill formulas, the main ingredients for each of them aren’t something that our Song Clan are able of acquiring. If Martial Uncle doesn’t find it disdainful, he may take the jade slip. Please consider it a gift for accepting our request, Martial Uncle!”

Han Li paused and took a deep look at the woman before smiling. With a moment of thought, he calmly said, “I’ve never been a cheap individual in my life. If the Spirit Kindle Fruit is truly within the valley, I will also greatly benefit from it, so there is no need to reward me; it is likely that I would’ve gone to the valley anyway. However, this ancient book of yours is quite useful to me. How about I exchange it for some medicine pills for cultivation progression? These pills should be suitable for your current cultivation.” Han Li then took a small green bottle from the storage pouch on his waist and handed it over to Cultivator Song.

The woman unconsciously accepted the bottle, but her face appeared hesitant as if she were at a complete loss. When Violet Spirit saw this, she simply smiled.

Violet Spirit chuckled and said, “Since it was given it to you, Big Sister Song should take it. Brother Han’s pill refinement techniques are truly vast. The pills are most likely refined from some high-grade demon cores. It will definitely bring your cultivation to the next stage. There is no need to hold back with business.”

Cultivator Song revealed delight upon hearing Violet Spirit. She repeatedly uttered thanks to Han Li before carefully putting the medicine bottle away.

Han Li smiled and took away the jade slip.

“Since the Spirit Kindle Fruit and the Nature Origin Pill cannot be preserved, it seems you three will be heading into the valley. If you are going straight to the spirit fruit and head nowhere else, there is a good chance of leaving intact. But for now, you should first gather together the supplementary materials for the Nature Origin Pill. Although these ingredients aren't nearly as rare as the Spirit Kindle Fruit, they will be difficult to find.” Han Li then sighed and solemnly said, “With regards to the details, I will only make a decision once everything is understood. After all, this matter is still quite a while away. If we are defeated in the war against the Moulan, the matter about Devilfall Valley can't even be considered. By then, we'll be attempting to retain our place in the Heavenly South.”

The three were startled upon hearing Han Li. Mei Ning couldn't help but ask, “What? Senior Han doesn't seem confident in this war.”

Han Li noncommittally said, “It's hard to say. At first glance, the united forces of the Heavenly South along with the home terrain advantage should be able to prevail against the Moulan. Even if the Heavenly South's three great cultivators and the Heavenly Dao Alliance's Long Han and Feng Bing are able to restrain the Moulan Divine Sages, those black-robed men are of unknown origins. They clearly belong to an external power meddling on our wary. They may cause something unexpected to happen.”

Violet Spirit's expression turned grave. “From what you're saying, the odds of victory for either side are even.”

“It can be said that way. However, the most likely possibility is...” Han Li's gaze flickered and his voice grew inaudible, much to the three women's surprise.

Han Li shook his head and calmly said, “Alright. That's enough of that. No one truly knows how the war will turn out in the

future. You simply need to make preparations for entering Devilfall Valley. Let's see if it is possible when the time comes. Who knows what might happen?"

Afterwards, Han Li no longer spoke of it. Rather, he curiously asked about what Mei Ning and Violet Spirit have been doing these past few days. At the same time, Han Li answered the excited questions about his escape from the Moulan Divine Sage.

Since speaking in such pleasant company as these three beauties was truly a delightful matter, time quickly passed by.

When Han Li saw that the sky had darkened, he took his leave. Cultivator Song also parted with him with Violet Spirit and Mei Ning seeing them off at the valley's entrance.

When they departed, Han Li saw that Mei Ning hesitated to say something several times, but in the end, she bit her lip and remained silent.

Han Li felt his heart throb at seeing her blush, and he turned his gaze to Violet Spirit, who looked at him with a mysterious smile. Unconsciously feeling a trace of embarrassment, he didn't dare to say any longer. With a parting word, Han Li flew off as a streak of azure light, bringing Cultivator Song with him back to Skyfirst City.

# Chapter 754: Transforming Flames

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Han Li and Cultivator Song flew alone in the skies, and they spoke not a word. But when they saw Skyfirst City in the distance, the woman hesitantly asked, “Martial Uncle Han, countless Nascent Soul eccentrics had entered Devilfall Valley and had never returned. Would Core Formation cultivators be able to find the spirit fruit and safely return from the valley?”

Han Li was somewhat surprised by her question and the light around them pulsed, causing them to slow down. He then astonishedly glanced at the woman.

After a moment of silence, he calmly said, “On cultivation alone, you are lacking much in comparison to the other cultivators that have sought treasure in the valley. If you encountered any danger, your chances of surviving would be vastly inferior. However, it is likely due to greed that these cultivators have perished. With so many Nascent Soul cultivators, there had to be some cultivators that could safely leave with one or two treasures, but most of them were blinded by the temptation for treasure, wishing to acquire just another item or perhaps some spirit medicine that can extend their lifespan or breakthrough their bottleneck. As such, it was only a matter of time before they perished.”

Cultivator Song frowned with worry. “Then from Senior’s words, we will most likely die?”

“If one doesn’t have a safe route through the valley and a way to leave and enter, they will most definitely die; apart from Master Cang Kin, no one else had lived to leave the valley.

Unless we have this, we shouldn’t even consider entering Devilfall Valley. It would be suicide. Although your cultivation is low, so long as you control your greed and fully investigate the whereabouts of the Spirit Kindle Fruit, you’ll be able to make succeed with some luck.

Of course, Devilfall Valley is the most dangerous area in Devilfall Valley. You should properly prepare yourself and set up your affairs in case you perish. As for the Ghost Spirit Sect, they should also know of the fruit, and will act to acquire it. They will most likely rush to be the first to acquire the treasure in the valley, forced to brave dangers in the fear that Marquis Nanlong will be faster. I fear their method of entering the valley will be quite risky.”

A trace of alarm appeared on the woman’s face. “Since Martial Uncle had guessed that the Ghost Spirit Sect’s method of entering the valley is dangerous, why didn’t you mention it before?”

Han Li smirked. “Didn’t it seem appropriate to tell this in front of the others? Could it be that you believe I have other intentions?”

After a brief pause of surprise, she hurriedly said, “No, I don’t dare to doubt Senior.”

“Relax. It is natural that you have doubts. It wasn’t out of malice that I didn’t mention this before. While this may come as some surprise to you and Mei Ning, Violet Spirit wouldn’t be shaken by this in the last. You should know that while the Nature Origin Pill is extremely precious, it is a bit of a waste on early Core Formation cultivators like you and Violet Spirit. With regards to Mei Ning, she will have a greater chance of entering Core Formation stage with the pill, and as a result, her lifespan will be extended by several hundred years. But with you and Violet Spirit, you two would most likely break through to mid Core Formation stage with time in respect to your exceptional aptitudes. If you take the pill, it will only save you about a hundred years to break through the bottleneck.”

“On one hand, you and Violet Spirit will save yourselves a hundred years of cultivation, but on the other, you could die after entering Devilfall Valley. These two choices vary from person to person. I don’t know what you will choose, Martial Niece, but

Violet Spirit would definitely take the risk. A hundred years saved on cultivation is an additional hundred years she further cultivate, and she doesn't plan on staying as a Core Formation cultivator. This will vastly increase her chances of reaching Nascent Soul stage." As Han Li spoke, it was with a heavy tone.

Cultivator Song revealed an odd expression. "Martial Uncle means to say that Violet Spirit has already steeled her resolve to become a Nascent Soul cultivator? Is that why she is willing to brave the grave dangers of the valley?"

Han Li turned his head to glance at the fading red sky as if reminiscing in past memories, and he slowly said, "That's right. Violet Spirit's experiences are quite different from you and Mei Ning. She had been pressured by powerful cultivators several times, and even had her own mother's sect taken away from her. Although she hadn't mentioned this to anyone else after she had fled, I can faintly feel that her ambition has far surpassed that of an ordinary cultivator."

Then under Cultivator Song's amazed gaze, Han Li paused for a moment as if deliberating what to say. "If the Spirit Kindle Fruit is truly within the valley, I will most likely make an attempt for it. After all, it is incredibly difficult to progress one's cultivation in Nascent Soul stage. If I do not seize this opportunity, I may find myself forever struck at early Nascent Soul stage. However, I won't be saying about being overly careful before entering Devilfall Valley, unless it is absolutely necessary. When the time comes to enter, I'll be sure to stress what dangers you should be careful off and point out any dangerous aspects of the Ghost Spirit Sect's method to enter the valley. Nevertheless, what I said before were merely guesses. It is possible that the Ghost Spirit Sect has a method of entering the valley that is even greater than Master Cang Kun's. This was also one of the reasons I hadn't mentioned the matter from before."

When Cultivator Song heard this, she grew silent but her eyes

seemed to reveal understanding.

“Enough of that. I originally didn’t plan on telling you this, but since you asked, I gave you an answer. Having returned to Skyfirst city, your most important task is to survive the battle ahead. It will be your top priority.

If you run out of luck, something may happen during the war, and you need not further consider going to Devilfall Valley. It will be the same for me. When I return to Skyfirst City, I will be setting the matter aside for more pressing affairs.” With that said, Han Li wore a self-mocking smirk.

Cultivator Song felt her heart trembled at his words and curtsied. “Many thanks for Martial Uncle’s advice.”

Han Li waved his arm. “It is hardly advice. Just needlessly said things that you would’ve come to understand after some thought. Let’s enter the city, the sky is nearly dark.”

“Yes, Martial Uncle!”

The azure streak of light shot forth at full speed once more and entered through the gates of the city.

...

Several days later in the Drifting Cloud Sect’s encampment, Han Li was sitting cross-legged in a hidden room surrounded by layers of restrictions. He was holding up a fifteen meter long sword in his hands and was thinking of something with a frown. Strange azure and purple flames were currently burning on top of them — the Purple Apex flames and the azure flames of the azure lantern.

After he came back from his meeting with Violet Spirit, Han Li had Lu Luo introduce him to many Nascent Soul cultivators with good relations to the Drifting Cloud Sect. During that time, he asked this various cultivators to take a look at this difficult problem. However, they were at a complete loss over the matter.

These cultivators naturally knew of Han Li’s great reputation so

they didn't dare to be negligent and wished to establish good relations with him instead. There were a few that even had a rather pleasant conversation with him, but nevertheless, Han Li gained little from his discussions. Afterwards, he immediately sought out a quiet room to deal with the lingering damage of the battle — the azure flames that had never ceased burning.

The swords weren't harmed as the flames burned. They were in balanced competition with the Purple Apex Flames. While it was unknown what kind of devilflame this azure flame was, its might was just as astonishing as his own Purple Apex Flames. He could now rely on quantity to forcefully restrain the flames, but it was still a problem with how he could refine them.

If these azure flames weren't eliminated, he wouldn't be able to use his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords, nor would he be able to easily draw on the Celestial Ice Flames and Purple Apex Flames to attack.

At that moment, Han Li was staring at the sword with wandering eyes. After a long moment of consideration, he raised his hand above the huge sword and struck it with an azure spell seal.

The huge sword revolved once in the air and split into several tens of small flying swords with a ring. Han Li's spiritual sense stirred and a majority of his flying swords shot back into his body as streaks of azure lights. Only one sword remained in the air, slowly floating in front of Han Li.

Han Li glanced at the sword's azure and purple flames. He narrowed his eyes and he suddenly opened his mouth, spitting out a streak of purple flames directly onto the surface of the flying sword. It flourished with purple flames, restraining the azure flames.

Then under the control of an incantation seal, roiling purple flames slowly pressured the azure flames to the tip of the swords before turning into a pea-sized ball of azure light.

Having seen this, Han Li wore a grave expression. With a deep breath, he began to form incantation gestures in a flurry, sending streak after streak of various colored spell seals onto the sword. In an instant, the sword's purple flames grew turbulent and more powerful as they formed wave after wave of flames towards the tip of the azure sword.

The azure flame began to sway and grow unsteady on the sword tip as if it were about to be extinguished. However, the azure light simply grew brighter as the purple flames exert more pressure. No matter what the purple flames did, the azure light remained at the sword tip without being extinguished.

A trace of dread appeared from his eyes as the hand incantations he formed grew more hurried.

A short moment later, Han Li's face grew unsightly; there wasn't any change in the slightest. Then with another moment of thought, an icy glint appeared in his eye and he waved his hand, covering it in a layer of brilliant purple flames.

Then without the slightest hesitation, he pinched off the azure flames from the flying swords.

# Chapter 755: Lightning Bead

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Han Li pinched the azure flames at the tip of the sword and held them in his enflamed fingers. However, he felt his fingertips grow numb as a huge force began to emit from the azure flames and forcefully repelled his grasp — the azure flame still remaining on the sword.

Han Li was dumbstruck but something soon came to mind. He widened his flaming hand and had the purple flames alone envelope the azure flames. Han Li's hand remained still as his fingers continued to spout blinding violet flames, causing intertwined azure and purple light to pulse.

This continued for quarter hour more before he sighed and shake his hand. The purple flames in his hand disappeared without a trace, leaving behind only a dazzling and translucent ember of azure flame.

This strange flame was more troublesome than he had anticipated. The Violet Apex Flames may be able to contend against them, but it found it difficult to refine them.

After some further deliberation, Han Li raised his hand and pointed to the flying sword in front of him. With muffled claps of thunder, the flying sword burst forth with arcs of golden lightning. As soon as the lightning appeared, it shot towards the azure ember in countless tendrils and completely enveloped it. The pea-sized ember glowed and cleanly absorbed the golden lightning as if it were a bottomless pit. Its brilliance grew vastly bright and the flame swelled to the size of an egg.

As this occurred, Han Li's eyes shined with a bright blue light as he stared at the azure ember absorbing the golden lightning. His expression wavered as he stood still for an unknown amount of time before sighing. The blue light within his eyes faded away, but his face now appeared hesitant. A short moment later, he came to a

decision and nodded. He opened his mouth and breathed in the bit of purple flame that still remained on the flying sword.

Without the suppression of the Purple Apex Flames, the azure flames on the sword flourished and enveloped the entire sword in a mere moment. As the treasure was bonded to Han Li's soul, his face immediately paled from the pain that followed. However, he didn't pay this any further attention and simply flicked his fingers towards the sword, shooting streaks of azure swordstreaks from his hands.

The azure swordstreaks had been completely absorbed just like the Divine Devilbane Lightning. However, Han Li continued to circulate the spiritual power inside his body as if nothing had happened and continued to strike the azure ember with repeated attacks of swordstreaks, quickly consuming their magic power.

As a result, the azure flames took the swordstreaks as kindle, causing them to roar and surge with brilliant light.

At that moment, Han Li had already consumed a third of his magic power.

With the lantern flames greatly enlarged, Han Li smiled and ceased attacking. Instead, he beckoned at the sword Qi within the fireball.

In a gust of wind, the Bamboo Cloudswarm Sword was able to easily leave the azure flames. It circled once around before landing in his hand.

Han Li lowered his head and took a look at it. He couldn't help but smile at the translucent blade being completely free of flame.

"As expected! Although the flames are miraculous, it has a limit of how much spiritual power it can absorb. Once it absorbed too much of the Azure Sword Qi, it was capable of being manipulated." Once that was muttered, he slapped his hands together and the sword disappeared in a flash of light.

Han Li then turned his eyes towards the azure ball of flame before him. He lightly tapped it, sending a sliver of his spiritual sense into it. The azure fireball then trembled and began to slowly revolve as it pulsed with light.

Han Li raised his brow and attempted to command the fireball with his spiritual sense, but it merely swayed from start to finish. A short moment later, he was able to command it to sluggishly fly three meters into the air at a crooked angle.

When Han Li saw this, he stroked his chin and began to mutter to himself. Given how powerful the azure flames were, it would be a waste not to use them.

Although he was able to forcefully control the flames from the large quantities of Azure Essence Sword Qi that it had absorbed, it was clear to see that this method also came with its flaws. After all, these flames weren't something that he had refined. It would be difficult to control it as naturally as the Celestial Ice Flames.

Han Li frowned and stared at the azure fireball as his mind wandered. He then reached for his storage pouch and summoned a flawlessly smooth rib bone and a faint yellow bottle into his hand. This was the Bone Sage's jade slip that recorded the Profound Yin Arts and the magic tool he had used to absorb demon beast souls.

Han Li opened the bottle and released a cloud of black Qi. He grabbed the air in the direction of the Black Qi and summoned it into his palm. Then under the control of his spiritual sense, the ghost Qi immediately flew into the rib bone that he held in his other hand. In a moment, it turned black and began to float in the air, releasing a sinister black light.

When Han Li saw this, he pressed the bone against his forehead and quickly read through the contents of the Profound Yin Arts, searching for something in particular.

Just as Han Li found the "Yinfire Lightning" technique, he rejoiced and began to carefully read through its contents.

While the technique's name may suggest it to be ordinary, it was a technique on par with the Profound Yin Art's Heavenwide Corpsefire. However, it wasn't some secret Devil Dao technique. Rather, it was a secret technique to refine lightning beads like the Heavenly Lightning Seed that Han Li had used in the past. According to its description, the Yinfire Lightning possessed astonishing might when successfully created, displaying a destructive might even greater than the Heavenwide Corpsefire.

[1] first introduced in chapter 163 while Han Li was still in Qi Condensation stage.

In principle, condensing such a large quantity of pure yinfire into an explosive required other materials in order to stabilize it, creating a weapon that was capable of inflicting devastating damage.

But it was a pity that these mines were only single use items. Not only were there many restrictions that must be followed when refining them, it was also troublesome as well. It was only refinable by cultivators who could control lightning attribute spirit power. As a result, Zenith Yin and the Bone Sage had never been able to refine these items.

When Han Li first saw the Yinfire Lightning refinement method, he didn't pay much attention to it. He was able to control Divine Devilbane Lightning, but he swept past it since he only wished for secret techniques that were easy to learn such as the Yin Devil Execution. But now that this troubling azure flame had appeared before him, he recalled the refinement technique for the Yinfire Lightnings.

Originally, refining the Yinfire Lightnings required a large quantity of spiritual power and the rate of success wouldn't be large either. Also, there were sparsely few cultivators capable of controlling lightning, and these weapons were short lived as they were consumables.

Although Han Li couldn't use the Profound Yin Arts, he no longer needed to strictly follow the Yinfire Lightning refinement technique with his current knowledge and cultivation. He simply needed to alter the refinement method to make sure of the azure flames in order to refine them. And since the azure flames might were no less than the Purple Apex Flames, they would be no less powerful than the Yinfire Lightnings that were originally described.

In the past, he had thoughts of using the Celestial Ice Flames or even the Purple Apex Flames to refine the mines. But because the two flames were too difficult to refine and he lacked the amount needed to face enemies, he didn't dare to squander them on this idea and tossed the matter to the back of his head.

Now that he had the azure flames, which he could neither store nor refine, he could now put his plan into action. This way, he would have another devastating weapon to use in the incoming war.

With that thought, Han Li took a look at the other items in his storage pouch.

Han Li was eventually able to find the materials needed to refine the lightning beads. These items weren't rare in the least; they were all common materials used to refine tools and pills.

After taking out all these items once by one and arranging them in front of him, he faced the flickering fireball and he raised his hands with a grave expression. With a series of rumbles, two arcs of lightning shot out from his palms, striking the azure fireball.

...

In the main hall of the Drifting Cloud Sect encampment, Lu Luo was motionlessly sitting in his chair without a trace of emotion. There were several Drifting Cloud Sect Core Formation disciples standing on front of him, the red-clothed Cultivator Song among them. They all appeared somewhat apprehensive.

Lu Luo calmly asked, “Martial Nephew Duan, your Martial Uncle Han still hasn’t left seclusion after these many days?”

“Reporting, Martial Uncle Han has remained in seclusion for two months. Junior Martial Sister Song and I have been guarding his room since the very beginning. He had yet to leave.”

Lu Luo sighed and muttered, “When your Martial Uncle Han entered seclusion, he had already told me that he had to make preparations for the coming war and wished that we wouldn’t bother him during his seclusion. However, the Moulan have just about finished gathering together and are about to move. There is a meeting being held amongst the high grade cultivators, and they want your Martial Uncle Han to attend. They had used this as a reason to delay the meeting, but now that the three great cultivators had arrived at Skyfirst City, they sent a request for Han Li to attend it. Since this is a meeting that only mid Nascent Soul cultivators can attend, this clearly illustrates your Martial Uncle Han’s importance to them. We can’t push this off any longer. Furthermore, I reckon that this meeting will decide the final decisions for the battle. If someone from our sect were to attend, it would bring great benefits.”

Having heard Martial Uncle Lu, the other cultivators in the hall wore a bitter smile.

After a moment of hesitation, Cultivator Song worriedly said, “However, Martial Uncle Han is certain to be at a crucial moment of his seclusion. If we were to rashly disturb him, wouldn’t we spoil his efforts?”

The middle-aged cultivator with a long, thin mustache also appeared hesitant and said, “Even if there are some apprehensions, Martial Uncle Lu can no longer delay the matter. The meeting is being held tomorrow. If Martial Uncle Han doesn’t come...”

“What’s going on, everyone?” At that moment, a soft voice was clearly heard throughout the hall.

When Lu Luo heard this, he wore a face of delight.

# Chapter 756: Old Devil Cloudbreak

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Soon after those words echoed through the hall, Han Li suddenly appeared at the entrance wearing a calm expression.

Just as the Core Formation cultivators bowed towards Han Li, Lu Luo stood up with a smile, “Junior Martial Brother Han, you’ve finally left seclusion. This is great!”

Han Li smiled and said, “I wasn’t completely finished. I planned on continuing my seclusion, but I felt worried about the matter of the Moulan and thought I’d take a look. It seems I’ve arrived at just the right time.”

“Hehe! It seems Junior Martial Brother Han has also heard our Martial Nephews. There had been many people that had wished to see you recently. There isn’t much to say about the others, but the three great cultivators personally invited you to attend a high echelon meeting. Junior Martial Brother Han, you must participate in it. Our Drifting Cloud Sect had mustered a majority of its power, and I don’t wish for our sects disciples to die in the masses. Junior Martial Brother Han must go and listen to how they’ve made arrangements in the war, and put my worries to ease.” Once Lu Luo finished speaking, he wore a solemn expression.

“Yes, since I now know of this matter, I will be certain to pay them a visit tomorrow. I’ve long wished to speak with the three great cultivators. I am looking forward to seeing them tomorrow.” Han Li’s reply was much to Lu Luo’s satisfaction, and they chatted about what had happened in the past two months.

Han Li frowned upon hearing Lu Luo’s words. “The spell warriors have begun to attack the border fortresses?”

Lu Luo’s smile faded away and he said with a deep tone, “That’s right. To tell the truth, this had only started in the past four days. Although this hadn’t caused many deaths, it is a sign that the

Moulan had already finished their preparations.”

Han Li blinked and slowly said, “The Moulan had prepared themselves so quickly. How well have our forces made arrangements? Surely they must’ve made much progress.”

Lu Luo explained, “Our circumstances greatly differ from the Moulan. Although the Moulan spell warriors had joined together their tribes and are not wholly united, their tribes aren’t as varied or numerous as the sects in the Heavenly South. It has proven difficult to have these various sects to join together in spite of the differences in technique, power, and wealth — much more difficult in comparison to the Moulan. Not to mention that the Moulan had spent nearly a century preparing for this invasion; our current preparations are simply lacking. But fortunately, the four superpowers’ have wholeheartedly committed themselves to the war. There is a chance at winning this war.”

Han Li stroked his nose and sullenly said, “According to what you’ve said, the war could start at any moment.”

Lu Luo sighed and helplessly said, “That’s right. Why else would the three great cultivators quickly meet together and convene to hold a meeting of mid Nascent Soul cultivators the next day? After all, mid Nascent Soul cultivators are amongst the peak existences in the Heavenly South.”

As the other cultivators in the hall listened to Han Li and Lu Luo chat, their expressions unconsciously grew solemn. However, Han Li soon turned to ask about the recent plans of the Drifting Cloud Sect.

The Drifting Cloud Sect disciples all spoke in a flurry, each informing him of the several squads they formed and how they were holding day long drops for group combat. Han Li simply nodded in silence. These types of arrangements were to be expected. Wars weren’t something fought alone. Even immensely powerful couldn’t withstand a barrage of attacks of thousands of

trained cultivators.

Of course ordinarily, high-grade cultivators wouldn't find themselves in such dangerous positions. So long as they aren't surrounded by a squad of cultivators, these high-grade cultivators are able to use large scale abilities to eliminate lower grade cultivators in droves. As such, it was extremely crucial for enemy high grade cultivators to be placed in check.

This was true for both cultivators and spell warriors. In a battle between high grade cultivators, whichever side lacked the forces to check the other was already bound to lose. As a result, Han Li asked about the Drifting Cloud Sect's affairs, wondering what was the true reason the three great cultivators of the Heavenly South was holding a meeting between mid Nascent Soul-sage cultivators.

He reckoned that in addition to the arrangement of the cultivator armies, the upcoming meeting would most likely include arrangements of how to deal with the Moulan Sages.

With that thought, Han Li couldn't help but coldly smile. In the last two months, not only did he eliminate the azure flame from all of his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords, but he also used the Divine Devilbane Lightning to turn the azure flames into eight lightning beads. When Han Li recalled his attempts to create the lightning beads, he couldn't help but wryly smile. His efforts were met with mostly failure. It had been a truly exquisite way to rid off the azure lantern flames.

After a moment more of chatting, Han Li left the hall and returned to his assigned residence to hone his spirit. In the two months he spent unceasingly purging his swords of the azure flame and refining them into lightning beads, he had exhausted himself quite heavily.

On the next morning, Han Li left the Drifting Cloud Sect encampment and walked towards the heart of the city. He soon found himself looking a huge stone palace hall in the distance.

Because the entirety of Skyfirst City had been built as a rushed construction, even the main hall used to host meetings between the higher echelon of the four superpowers appeared quite ordinary and coarse. Apart from being larger than the Heavenly Dao Union's meeting hall, it had little else of note, apart from the several Core Formation cultivators standing guard in front of it.

When they saw Han Li approach, they swept their spiritual sense past him and they immediately welcomed him. One of the Core formation cultivators saluted him first and respectfully said, "Senior, only mid Nascent Soul-stage cultivators are allowed to participate in the meeting today. May I ask— "

"Here." Without waiting for him to finish, Han Li waved his arm and flung a white jade slip over to him. It was the invitation that Han Li had received the day before.

After the guard swept his spiritual sense into the jade slip, he apologetically said, "So it was Senior Han! This Junior has been lacking in manners. Please go in!" He then stood to the side and opened the door.

Han Li smiled and thought to enter when his expression suddenly changed. His steps grew sluggish as he turned his head to look in the direction of a small street. There were two people slowly walking through it, a man and a woman.

The man appeared to be only about twenty years of age, and he wore a rich embroidered robe. His skin was flawless, his face handsome, and every one of his movements smooth and elegant. However, this youth's gaze often glanced around, occasionally revealing vast changes in expression. And the wrinkles at the corner of his eyes suggested that his age was actually quite a bit older than his appearance suggested.

But what was most strange of all, was the soft and feminine aura that emitted from his body as if he was actually a woman dressed as a man. It was rather strange.

When Han Li saw this man, he felt his heart tremble and his face grew stern. This person was a mid Nascent Soul cultivator, someone who should be participating in this meeting. From his demonic appearance, he should most likely be a Devil Dao cultivator, but just what sect did he belong to?

As these thoughts raced through Han Li's mind, his gaze turned to the woman that was closely following after him. He couldn't help but yelp in astonishment at the sight of her.

The woman was young and beautiful, and she wore magnificent bright red robes. She carried a lithe grace as she walked forward. She had an indescribable allure to her than possessed endless beauty. But when Han Li saw her face, he wore an odd expression but he soon replaced it with a wry smile.

### [It was her, Dong Xuan'er!](#)

There was no doubt about it. That youthful old eccentric was certain to be from the Harmonious Bond Sect, the top sect in the Devil Dao. In the long years he hadn't seen her, Dong Xuan'er had risen to mid Core Formation stage. It was rather surprising she had cultivated this far, given her poor aptitude.

Han Li stood motionlessly at the hall's gate and examined their every action. Naturally, the Core Formation cultivators standing guard also saw the two. As a result, a majority of the cultivator's faces grew pale. One of them spoke with a uneasy tone, "I didn't expect that the Harmonious Bond Sect's Old Devil Gu would actually come."

'Old Devil Gu?' When Han Li heard this, he suddenly recalled someone. It seemed in addition to their late Nascent Soul stage cultivator, they had one other famous eccentric. This person was endowed with a strange constitution. Both Yin and Yang was contained in his body, allowing him to cultivate the peak Devil Dao techniques of the Harmonious Bond Sect. An expert of appearance mending, he named himself Daoist Cloudpart, known to others as

## Old Devil Cloupart.

By cultivating some unknown technique, he had become overwhelmed with lust, and would often go through the shady actions of seizing others and having his way with them. Be they handsome men or beautiful women, whenever someone caught his eye, they wouldn't be let go. As a result, he had offended many large sects. However, his cultivation was truly profound. And with the backing of the Harmonious Bond Sect, none dared to retaliate. Additionally, those he seized would be released once he had his fun with them as he wasn't particularly fond of killing. As a result, the sects of these victims could only conceal this matter and bear with it.

With such a reputation in the cultivation world, people grew fearful at the very sight of him. When young cultivators heard of his reputation, they would flee from the sight of him without exception. Those who couldn't run would simply be left shaking in trepidation, fearing that they would draw his attention.

'Could it be this youth is the old eccentric?' Although Han Li had nothing to fear from him, the man gave him a feeling of unease.

Just as it so happened, the handsome youth had taken notice of Han Li who was standing in front of the gate. He examined Han Li with narrowed eyes before smiling at him, faintly exuding a trace of seductive intent.

When Han Li saw this, a cold chill shot up his back but he forced himself to return the smile. But when Dong Xuan'er spotted Han Li, she wore an expression of shock. The handsome man walked towards the hall as if he took no notice of this.

As Devil Cloupart continued, Han Li walked inside and disappeared from sight. When the youthful man saw this, his smile disappeared and he calmly asked Dong Xuan'er, "What, do you recognize this person? Your heartbeat quickened."

She was an unruly woman that used her wiles to charm her

fellow disciples in Yellow Maple Valley, and was paired with Han Li in Chapter 246 as a result, who was immune to her seductions. She was later captured in the Devil Dao Invasion by the Harmonious Bond Sect, and joined them.

# Chapter 757: A Meeting of Eccentrics

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Dong Xuan'er's expression remained somewhat baffled at the sight of Han Li, but she calmly replied, "That person was an old acquaintance of mine. Since I hadn't seen him for many years, his sudden appearance had surprised me."

"Old acquaintance? That early Nascent soul cultivator is allowed to enter today's meeting. And going from his youthful appearance, he should be the recently famous Drifting Cloud Sect Elder.

It is said he is surnamed Han, the same as the person you had mentioned before. Are they the same person?" Old Devil Cloudpart wasn't angered by her stiff reply. Rather, he spoke calmly as if he had an unordinary relationship with the woman.

Dong Xuan'er's complexion turned somewhat pale at his words, but she remained silent. A cold glint flashed from Old Devil Cloudpart's eyes. While he did drop the matter with a cold snort, a slight frown appeared on his face.

Cloudpart led her to the front of the palace hall and was promptly allowed in by the fearful Core Formation cultivators standing guard. Of course, Dong Xuan'er wasn't allowed to enter. She was led to side room to rest for the time being.

Not long after Han Li entered the palace hall, he soon saw the entrance of the meeting room and hurried inside.

The meeting room was rather simply arranged. Apart from a few rows of huge stone pillars, there was a large empty space at its center with seventeen exquisitely crafted wooden chairs placed several a meters apart from one another.

Eight cultivators were currently sitting amongst the chairs in various places. When Han Li entered, there were a few that indifferently glanced at him, a few that ignored him as well as others that were currently meditating. They all acted without

regard for any others.

However, there was one person who kindly smiled at him when he entered. He beckoned to Han Li and said, "Fellow Daoist Han, you've emerged from seclusion. If you don't find it distasteful, how about you sit next to me?" This man was the leader of the Heavenly Dao Alliance, the Phoenix Cry Sect's Long Han.

"Many thanks Brother Long!" Han Li sat down at his side and began to silently examine the other cultivators in the room.

A short moment later, Old Devil Cloudpart entered the room. He glanced at the others within and chuckled before boldly taking a seat in an empty chair. He sat down in the seat next to a blue-robed old man who was holding a white jade wine cup and a small emerald-green pot, drinking by himself.

When Old Devil Cloudpart sat near him, his fragrant scent drifted towards old man, causing the him to glare at Devil Cloudpart and curse his own luck. He paid no attention to the old man's dissatisfaction; instead, glancing around him and examining Han Li with much interest, much to Han Li's unease.

With a frown, he bluntly closed his eyes and remained expressionless. However, he was still pondering what relationship this old devil had with Dong Xuan'er

In the past, Dong Xuan'er had been stolen away by the Harmonious Bond Sect's young master and joined the sect. Although this old devil's reputation was awful, he wouldn't prey on his own sect's disciples. The two must have some other relationship, else he wouldn't have brought Dong Xuan'er along to the meeting.

Just as Han Li mulled over this, a number of people entered the hall in succession. They were all mid Nascent Soul cultivators, many of which were recognized by those already sitting in the hall. With a few hateful grudges between them, there were quite a few mocking statements said in passing amongst the greetings that

were uttered.

At that moment, Old Devil Cloudbreak's gaze finally left Han Li, but Han Li remained still regardless. As he recognized none of the other cultivators in the room, he didn't need to greet them.

"Fellow Daoist Shattered Soul! I didn't think that you would come. I heard that you had already cultivated your Nine Souls Technique to transformation stage. Congratulations."

'Shattered Soul!' Han Li's heart stirred at the mention of this name and he unconsciously opened his eyes. He saw an exceptionally shriveled grey-robed old man being called by a black-robed cultivator in the hall in a familiar manner. When the grey-robed old man heard him, he walked over to the black-robed cultivator with a smile.

Taking note of Han Li's action, Long Han smiled and asked, "What is it? Fellow Daoist Han has seen Daoist Shattered Soul before?"

Having recalled slaughtering Shattered Soul's disciples on his recent trip to the State of Yue, Han Li calmly replied, "No. I simply heard Senior martial brother Cheng mention him once before. I heard his abilities are quite vast."

With another smile, Long Han said, "Hehe, this comes as no surprise. I recall that Elder Cheng had fought him once before and he had suffered quite the loss. It is natural that a deep impression had been left behind. But with Fellow Daoist Han's current reputation, there is no need to fear him. However, there is one person amongst the mid Nascent Soul cultivators that you had best avoid offending. Even the three great cultivators have a headache dealing with him."

Han Li frowned and revealed shock. "Someone that is able to cause a headache for even the three great cultivators? Such a person exists?"

Long Han carefully explained, “Of course there is. This person had fought Fellow Daoist Sunreach of the three great cultivators and inflicted heavy injuries onto Fellow Daoist Sunreach in order to escape. As such, he was known to be an existence on par to the three great cultivators. However, this cultivator often keeps to himself. Even with the invasion of the Moulan, it's hard to say whether or not he will come. It would be of great help if he did.”

Han Li pursed his lips and curiously asked, “A cultivator able to injure a late Nascent Soul cultivator? It is no wonder why this person seems so exceptional! Could you tell me who he is?”

Continuing his smile, Long Han said, “You should've heard of his name before. His name is Eccentric Heavenvenge.”

Han Li wryly smiled and said, “Eccentric Heavenvenge! It is true; I have long heard of his vast reputation.” He suddenly recalled what had happened when the sacred tree area was infiltrated. At the time, the Righteous and Devil Dao spies had been afraid to kill the low grade cultivators out of fear that one of them may have been a descendant of Eccentric Heavenvenge.

Han Li blinked and chuckled. “However, it stands to mention that Brother Long and his wife are an existence equal to the three great cultivators as well.”

When Long Han heard this, he shook his head and flatly said, “Feng Bing and I may hold some power, but we wouldn't be able to stand against them alone. Of course, when we are together, it is a completely different matter altogether.”

Han Li smiled and thought to speak of the matter when he felt someone's gaze on him. It was icy and filled with ill intent. Vigilance filled Han Li's mind as his expression froze. He then turned his head to look at the source of the glare — an unfamiliar green-clothed old man with a long beard.

When the old man saw Han Li glance at him, he withdrew his gaze and expressionlessly turned his eyes elsewhere as if nothing

had happened. However, this didn't cause Han Li to relax. Instead, he continued staring at the old man for a long while.

Having seen what happened, Long Han asked with a smile, "What? Does Fellow Daoist Han not recognize this person?"

Feeling somewhat puzzled, Han Li replied, "Brother Long seems to imply that I should know who he is."

"This person is the grand elder of the Controlling Spirit Sect, Elder Dongmen Tu. He holds the most power in the sect. Although I hadn't spoken to this person before, I have heard his friendship with Gu Shuangpu was quite deep. While he might not say anything because of the irrefutable evidence that Gu Shuangpu was a Moulan Spy, he is certain to be resentful at you for having killed him. You have best be careful."

Han Li stroked his nose and wryly smiled before uttering a word of thanks.

A mere quarter hour later, most of the chairs in the room had been filled. There was quite a funny sight to behold at this point. Nearly all the Devil Dao cultivators were sitting on the right side of the room with most of the Righteous Dao cultivators sitting on the left. As the Heavenly Dao Alliance and the Nine Nations Union cultivators, they casually sat on either side.

Among these cultivators, Han Li found a familiar face, the Sailing Boundaries Sect's Cultivator Kuang. He was currently sitting on the Devil Dao's side. When he saw Han Li look over at him, he smiled at Han Li, to which Han Li responded with a nod.

At that moment, Long Han was giving Han Li an explanation on the two other Heavenly Dao cultivators through voice transmission. One of them was a plainly-dressed woman with an ordinary appearance with the other being an old man with a miserable appearance. Han Li glanced at the two and committed their appearances to memory.

Perhaps due to the many people in the room, their expression began to turn grave and they remained silent as they coldly examined one another. These cultivators were all peak existences in the Heavenly South, each of them from opposing factions and holding various intentions and thoughts of their own.

Amongst these people, Han Li could be considered the most unusual. Han Li allowed the old eccentrics to sweep their powerful spiritual sense across Han Li's body. When they saw his comparatively shallow cultivation, they all figured out who he was. After all, Han Li's fame over the past half year had reached the ears of all these old eccentrics. However, they simply saw him resting in his chair with his eyes closed. He appeared entirely calm in spite of current circumstances.

Just as the room became silent and even somewhat grave, three people walked into the room one after another, instantly catching the attention of these old eccentrics.

There was a large black-robed old man, a green-haired old man, and a cultivator with a sword on his back.

Han Li's expression remained calm, but he felt his heart began to thump. These three were the three great cultivators of the Heavenly South, the only late Nascent Soul-stage cultivators on the continent. They were all over a thousand years old. With a few exceptions, a majority of the people present managed to retain their calm like Han Li and waited for the three to begin speaking.

# Chapter 758: A Fatal Wager

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The three slowly walked towards the center of the hall and stood side by side. The large black-robed man with a sinister appearance spoke with a frigid tone, “You should all know who we are. There should be no need for introductions. This meeting will be presided by us three. Are there any objections?”

Once he was finished, his body suddenly emitted a huge spiritual pressure, enveloping the entire room. When the cultivators in the room felt these profound spiritual Qi fluctuations, their expressions changed one after another.

Han Li felt a wave of astonishment from this person’s amazing power. From his icy, demonic aura, he should be the Old Devil Concord. This old devil’s appearance was different from what he had imagined. In fact, his appearance was more in line with a cultivator from the Ghost Spirit Sect.

Unbeknownst to Han Li, each successive generation of the Harmonious Bond Sect grand elder was titled as the Old Devil Concord. Although the large black-robed man cultivated a devilish technique that had little relation to the Harmonious Bond Sect, he had no choice but to adopt the title.

At that moment, the others sensed the fearsomeness of the large man. Although they felt somewhat ill at ease, none of them dared to foolishly challenge the authority of the three great cultivators. For a time, silence reigned in the entire room as if in tacit approval of Old Devil Concord’s previous words.

The large black-robed man expressionlessly said, “Good, since there are no objections, there will be no need to speak any rubbish. To tell the truth, we do not have the time. This morning, the Moulan had sent an envoy delivering an official challenge of war. If we do not comply with their conditions, there will be a battle to death in seven days.”

An uproar occurred within the hall. “A challenge of war? Seven days? What conditions?”

The sword-bearing Daoist chuckled and calmly said, “Brother Yi’s words are correct. Everyone should first look over the Moulan’s challenge of war before we discuss a plan with how to deal with them. Although the war is coming earlier than we anticipated, with the abilities of everyone present, do we still have anything to fear from the Moulan?”

Although his voice wasn’t very loud, it was clearly heard by everyone in the room, leaving a calming chill on their hearts. The other cultivators felt alarmed by this sensation, but their uproar immediately cased. Rather, there was somewhat who muttered, “Sure enough, Great Truth Sect’s Meditative Arts are the way to do it.”

The middle-aged Daoist ignored those contemptuous words and took out a glistening red jade slip before casually tossing it to an old man across from him. He smiled and said, “This contains the Moulan’s challenge of war. How about Fellow Daoist take a look?”

The old man was startled, but he soon swept his spiritual sense into the jade slip. With a sudden change of expression, he gloomily handed it over to the person at his side. As a result, that person’s expression also grew unsightly after curiously reading through it.

As the war challenge was being passed through the various cultivators, Han Li shot an appraising glance at the sword-bearing, middle-aged Daoist and the azure-robed old man. The Daoist appeared to be about forty years of age but his skin was translucent and pure, and he had a face befitting of a scholar. He was the Righteous Dao Alliance’s Great Truth Sect’s Master Sunreach. As for the old man, he had a very ordinary appearance and plain clothes, revealing nothing particularly of note. But what caught Han Li’s attention was the old man’s long fingernails. They appeared exceptionally sharp and were a purple-black, occasionally shining with a faint black light. This person should be the Nine

Nations Union's Grand Elder Wei Wuya.

When Wei Wuya sensed Han Li's gaze, he turned to look at him with a trace of surprise before smiling at him. Han Li awkwardly returned the smile, and he couldn't help but ponder whether or not he would still smile once he knew of what happened between him and Nangong Wan.

Just as he pondered this, Long Han had already finished looking through the jade slip and he passed it to Han Li with an unsightly expression. He grew quite curious having seen many people react the same way, and promptly delved his spiritual sense into the jade slip. A short moment later, Han Li withdrew his spiritual sense with a frown and silently handed it over to another cultivator.

Not long after, everyone in the room read through the jade slip, each of them wearing an unsightly expression. Some of them even followed with a cold snort once they were done reading.

The Great Truth Sect's Master Sunreach asked with a mysterious smile, "Having read through the war challenge, what does everyone think?"

A green-robed man wearing a sinister expression coldly said, "They are rather arrogant to have us give them half of the Heavenly South Continent. Do they believe victory is already certain?"

A plump old man wore a sly expression and said, "That's right. Who was it that said we could end hostilities by merely ceding a few lands? They clearly don't understand that Moulan are merely hungering vultures. Perhaps we do not need to fight a decisive battle. If we stall them, they may slowly submit to attrition."

A large tan man sitting at the plump old man's side angrily said, "Fellow Daoist Lu, what do you mean by that? Is it because your Thousand Illusions Sect is deep within the Heavenly south that you don't care whether the rest of our sects live? A war of attrition might mean little to your sect, but how about ours?"

Without any fear of the large tan man, the pump old man indifferently said, “I was considering others when I said it. Any fallen sects can re-establish themselves, but lives can’t be easily replaced.”

Another person coldly said, “Humph! You speak of the matter quite simply. If our countries were abandoned, for what reason would we block the Moulan armies on behalf of your Devil Dao sects? We should simply move all of our sects into your State of Tianluo; that way, nobody will die.”

“You...”

“That’s enough. We’ve already come to a conclusion of the matter of a war of attrition and we won’t discuss it further. Now we must discuss how to deal with the armies of the Moulan spell warriors, not fight amongst each other.” The black-robed cultivator grew sullen having heard this and rebuked them.

When the three heard Devil Concord, they all wanted object, but they obediently obeyed and kept silent. In the cultivation world, strength spoke the loudest.

Master Sunreach solemnly added, “In truth, it isn’t necessary for you three to discuss the matter. We’ve already come to a decision. With the momentum of the Moulan armies and interference from outsiders, a war of attrition is impossible. If we do not gather together a majority of the Heavenly South’s power, we will be incapable of defending against the Moulan’s attack. If only a single country’s forces were to meet them, it would result in immediate defeat. Then when they are finished, they will most likely move on to the next of us. As a result, we must scatter the ranks of the Moulan in battle. We cannot rely on chance.”

A quick series of whispers interrupted the silence, only for it to quickly return.

Soon, the Controlling Spirit Sect’s Dongmen Tu shifted his gaze and asked, “Why not have the Moulan to reveal whatever tricks

are first up their sleeve? Why must we first risk having a wagered battle, and with such a heavy stake as well? There are materials that even we cannot put up on wager. Isn't there even more to be said about the destitute Moulan?"

Another cultivator then explained, "We know of this well. The Moulan Plains may be truly , impoverished, but what they lack in common resources such as spirit stone mines, they are compensated by the rare materials located there. There are even a few rare materials that they possess in greater quantities than we do."

Wearing a pensive expression, Dongmen Tu slowly said, "So it was like that. However, why is it that they are so confident of victory in this wagered battle. In addition to the late Nascent Soul cultivators, there are other cultivators that may join in this wagered as well. Up to ten wagered battles, all to the death. Could it be that they believe that we will simply abide by these terms?"

Given the cunning of the characters in the room, they all knew the Moulan put forward this risky battle with some scheme or trick in mind. They couldn't help but ponder with unease.

Han Li was also puzzled by this. The war challenge clearly stated that the proposed battle will have both sides send their own forces and make no use of any dirty handed methods. Instead, the cultivators that battle will be able to directly wager their rare materials in battle, and the winner could directly seize the loser's storage pouch.

What was particularly suspicious was that the war challenge also stated that these ten wagered matches must be held simultaneously, and any cultivators that are defeated will be incapable of running; they will die on stage. For this reason, the wagered battles will be held in a sealed spatial barrier. This barrier will be guarded by people on both sides, preventing either side from tampering with the battle.

“However, regardless of any tricks the Moulan may hold, this will prove to be a great opportunity for us. If we are able to kill a few high grade spell warriors before our armies fight, it will be of great benefit to us.”

“Humph. I fear the Moulan holds the same intentions as you do.” The hesitantly spoken statement was immediately rebuked.

Old Man Kuang of the Sailing Boundaries Study disdainfully said, “What is there to think about. If the Moulan wishes to hold a wagered battle, we don’t need to accept. In seven days, we will lay out our own arrangements. As a result, their plans will result in nothing.”

Master Sunreach sighed and helplessly said, “Unfortunately, while Brother Kuang’s words are reasonable, we are required to participate in this wagered battle, and we must win.”

Old Man Kuang frowned and discontentedly said, “What? What does Master Sunreach mean? We cannot allow ourselves to be led by the nose by the Moulan!”

Many of the other eccentrics in the room nodded in agreement.

# Chapter 759: A Lure

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Master Sunreach sullenly said, “We are well aware that there is something suspicious about this, but the Moulan had captured many cultivators on their warpath, a majority of them being Nine Nations Union cultivators. And in the process of providing assistance, many of sect disciples have also been captured. The envoy stated that they have about a thousand captives in total.”

In his alarm, Old Man Kuang immediately asked, “What did they say? Are they going to execute the captives if we do not agree to their conditions? Are the Moulan not afraid of our retaliation?”

Master Sunreach quickly replied, “The envoy didn’t state as such. However, he did speak of a chance to rescue these cultivators. In addition to the materials that were wagered for each of the ten wagered battles, each battle will wager the freedom of a hundred captive cultivators.”

The eccentrics in the hall looked at each other in dismay. A thousand cultivators aren’t particularly many and they will most likely be low grade cultivators. There wasn’t a need to save them, but if someone were to propose to abandon them, they would become the butt of criticism.

While these cultivators didn’t personally care about these captives, they were the representatives of various sects and clans of all sizes. There were particularly many cultivators that were captured in an attempt to slow down the Moulan armies. If they didn’t rescue them, the morale of their forces would plummet, and the low grade cultivators would feel particularly disappointed and few of them would fight with all of their strength. The other cultivators inwardly swore at the Moulan for their cunning.

Long Han agreed with a sigh, “Who would thought these grassland savages would be able to act so cleverly. They hardly used any strategy in their previous invasions, but now they act

with complete guile. We can't help but feel somewhat uneasy at this sudden change."

Master Sunreach swept his gaze across the room and solemnly said, "It seems that everyone realizes that this battle is something that we cannot refuse. Regardless of what they are planning, we must defeat the spell warriors in this battle, else it will strike at our morale. Moreover, this wagered battle seems to lack any tricks. They most likely hold other intentions. As a result, you Fellow Daoists need not worry about suffering any unexpected mishaps. If you have any doubts, we'll personally put a stop to these battles. Of course, since this is a battle to the death, we will not force anyone to join."

'This is voluntary?' When the eccentrics heard this, they coldly smiled and their eyes glinted as they remained silent.

Nobody was so foolish to accept. Even if there was nothing suspicious about these wagered battles, there were none wished to fight to the death. After all, one had to strenuously cultivate for several hundreds of years in order to reach this current stage of cultivation. They wouldn't easily expose oneself to danger.

Han Li also remained silent. Although he didn't mind exerting a bit of strength to fight in the war, he didn't wish to brave any unnecessary risks. In that last battle at the Yellow Dragon Mountains, he had nearly lost his life; he didn't wish to relive the experience.

Old Devil Concord grew sullen at everyone's silence and coldly snorted. The bone-chilling sound caused the seated cultivators to feel a chill down their back. However, these cultivators still decided to remain silent.

Master Sunreach shook his head at the sight and also revealed a trace of helplessness. Wei Wuya also narrowed his eyes and said not a word.

Master Sunreach didn't allow this awkward silence to continue

and said, “Before we arrived, we had a bit of a discussion. Since these wagered battles will prove dangerous, we have decided that any of the spoils gained from these battles will belong solely to the victor. Doesn’t this somewhat make up for the danger?

To the best of my knowledge, you Fellow Daoists should be lacking some rare materials, materials that you’ve been unable to find. We have some in our collection that we are able to persuade you with.” Once this was said, his gaze swept past the room once more and his gaze stopped upon Han Li.

Han Li felt his heart tremble and he felt somewhat puzzled. The other cultivators in the room felt the same. Although the sword-bearing Daoist had mentioned some alluring conditions, much to the temptations to those present, none took the initiative to step forward and participate in the wagered battle.

But at that moment, Wei Wuya suddenly turned his head towards Daoist Shattered Soul and began to send him a voice transmission. The despondent Daoist Shattered Soul suddenly sat straight and wore an expression of delight. He then began to silently move his lips and converse with Wei Wuya through voice transmission.

A short moment later, Daoist Shattered Soul’s expression wavered with hesitation. At that same moment, Devil Concord began to send a voice transmission.

Devil Cloudpart appeared completely aloof since he had entered the hall, but when he heard his sect’s grand elder’s voice transmission, he immediately frowned with a gloomy expression. It was unknown what was said to him.

After a moment of thought, Daoist Shattered Soul eventually said, “Fine. So long as you uphold what was agreed. I don’t mind braving danger just this once.” When the others heard this, they were absolutely stunned.

Then, Devil Cloudpart said, “Since Fellow Daoist Shattered Soul is participating, I will go as well. It would be truly unfortunate if

these rare materials were lost to me.” The old devil coldly smiled, but a trace of anger could faintly be seen from his face.

The other cultivators glanced at each other. Although they didn’t say anything, they were deeply startled. Regardless of what had convinced the two, it caused all the others to feel ill at ease.

As expected, the three great cultivators each began to send voice transmissions to cultivators in the hall one after another. Most of these cultivators would happily or worriedly agree to fight in the wagered in the battle. There were only two that coldly shook their head and refused.

When Han Li saw this, various thoughts began to swirl through his mind. But at that moment, Master Sunreach’s voice had reached his ear. “Fellow Daoist Han, I heard that you were currently searching for a large quantity of Auric Essence. Is this true?”

When Han Li heard this, he felt his heart pound. It was no surprise that he knew of this. His request of the Heavenly Dao Alliance’s search for auric essence wasn’t a secret affair.

After calming his heart, Han Li said, “That’s right. I require some Auric Essence in order to refine my magic treasure. Could it be that Fellow Daoist Sunreach has a large amount of it?”

Master Sunreach chuckled with a grin. “Fellow Daoist Han guessed correctly. Fellow Daoist Wei and I have each acquired a large chunk of Auric Essence. Its quantity should be enough for Fellow Daoist to use. Are you interested?”

After pondering to himself for a moment, he non-committedly replied, “I would like to first see if the Auric Essence is to my satisfaction before I consider fighting.”

Master Sunreach agreed with a smile. In such a brief amount of time, five cultivators had agreed to fight. They were all like Han Li. It was only after some thought that they readily agreed. But even

as hesitant as they were, their responses were to Master Sunreach's satisfaction. He then promptly ceased his voice transmissions and began to make arrangements with how the Moulan armies should be dealt with.

In spite of the clamor of the eccentrics speaking of how to make use of spell formation tools and deal with the troublesome spirit technique formations of the Moulan, Han Li's mind had already wandered off as he pondered about the Auric Essence.

To tell the truth, Han Li had been dissatisfied with the might of the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords. It wasn't that his flying swords were inferior to the might of his fellow cultivators, but rather they were too weak in the face of the enemies that he had encountered.

If he faced weak opponents, he wouldn't have to use them. He would use the Azure Essence Swordstreaks to deal with them. But against towering opponents, his flying swords would prove quite meager.

But with the Azure Essence Sword Art's last recorded divine ability, the Aureate Sword Formation, Han Li's Bamboo Cloudsward Swords would be able to contend against a late Nascent Soul cultivator for some time, even if he could only muster a small portion of its complete power.

As for the Heavenvoid Cauldron, he hadn't personally witnessed any of its actual power. As he only heard endless praise of it from Silvermoon, he started to grow doubtful of it.

Because the Aureate Sword Formation was a great divine ability that would allow him to establish himself in the cultivation world, he needed to acquire a large quantity of it in order to make use of the formation. However, Han Li felt uncertain about participating in the wagered match for it. With some thought, he decided to first see how much Auric Essence was being offered before deicing. If it was enough Auric Essence for him to refine the Aureate Formation, he may find himself agreeing.

So long as his opponent wasn't one of the Moulan Divine Sages, he felt he had nothing to fear. Even if the Moulan were to engage in any trickery during the wagered battles, he would be able to escape the trifling barrier with his Thunderstorm Wings and his Purple Apex Flames.

With this thought over, Han Li felt calm once more and began to listen to what was being planned.

This meeting was held for nearly two hours under the guidance of Master Sunreach. While Old Devil Concord occasionally added a few words in, Wei Wuya remained completely silent on the matter.

Something worthy of note was how both Master Sunreach and Devil Concord had highly valued Long Han. Whenever a matter related to the Heavenly Dao Alliance came up, they had always asked for his opinion. It appeared to be true that Long Han was able to contend against the three great cultivators together with his wife.

Just as the discussion was about to come to a close, the cultivators who weren't participating in the wagered battle were given a few specific duties. Afterwards, Master Sunreach called the end of the meeting and bid everyone farewell, wishing them to properly prepare for what was to come. However, there were still three cultivators that hadn't left, one of them being Han Li.

As for the other two, they were Devil Cloudbreak and a gorgeous woman with a bloodless complexion. The woman had remained silent in the previous discussion as Han Li did.

# Chapter 760: The Icefrost Silkworms and Auric Essence

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Once most of the others left, Devil Concord expressionlessly said, “Junior Martial Brother, follow me! There is something I must say to you alone!” He then walked out of the hall without turning back.

Devil Cloudpart’s gaze wandered for a moment and silently followed him after some hesitation. It seemed he greatly feared the large black-robed man.

Master Sunreach waited until the Devil Concord and Devil Cloudpart departed before facing Han Li and the pale woman. “Fellow Daoists Han and Bai, let’s have a proper chat. How about you first take a look at the items you want and then decide whether or not you’ll be participating in the wagered battles. This humble Daoist understands your reasoning. After all, this matter will be extremely dangerous. If there isn’t a proper reward, no one would take the risk. But regardless if these items are to your satisfaction, I hope you two Fellow Daoists will be participating in the wagered battles.”

Wei Wuya simply stood to the side and held his hands behind his back. He was calmly examining the two.

When they heard Master Sunreach, Han Li didn’t reply. Rather, the gorgeous pale woman frowned and said, “I am a woman who treads the solitary path. I do not care whether the Moulan invades the Heavenly South or the other way around. Were it not for your message speaking of this item, I wouldn’t have emerged from seclusion. Let’s get the ugly matters out of the way first. If what you have is not to my satisfaction, I will leave without reservations.”

Master Sunreach wasn’t angered at her cold words, and instead replied with a warm tone, “Fellow Daoist Bai, there is no need for

this! Although I was somewhat mistaken for what happened in the past, in truth I was doing what was best for you.”

The woman’s expression sank and she coldly snorted, “I am the judge of whether or not it was mistaken! Enough of the past; bring out the item.”

When Han Li heard this, he felt shocked despite his calm exterior. This woman surnamed Bai seemed to have a dispute of some sort, perhaps due to a past relationship.

When Master Sunreach saw the woman’s angered expression, he could only helplessly shake his head and took out a white jade box from his storage pouch.

It appeared rather ordinary as if made of common materials. But in the instant it appeared, the entire room dropped in temperature as if they were in the dead of a harsh winter. Even Han Li, who had long grown unfazed by weather, couldn’t help but feel unwell in the face of such cold.

The woman surnamed Bai revealed excitement upon sensing the icy cold that the box emitted.

At that moment, Master Sunreach wordlessly offered the jade box to the woman. After she took it into her hands, she opened it, revealing it clearly to Han Li.

They were a pair of transparent crystalline cocoons. They emitted a trace of cold Qi that caused Han Li to frown. They seemed to be cocoons of the Icefrost Silkworms, who were ranked last on the list of exotic insects.

Although this exotic insect wasn’t very powerful in battle, it has an inconceivable divine ability that is difficult to find. If this woman truly required these insects, it was quite possible she would agree to fight in the wagered battle.

“Why are they cocoons? These aren’t fully grown.” To Han Li’s surprise, the woman’s expression turned unsightly upon seeing

them.

Master Sunreach replied with a calm expression, “Fellow Daoist Bai, these Icefrost Silkworms were found a hundred meters deep inside a sheet of ice. They aren’t common; they are top grade Monarch Silkworms. Look at them with your spiritual sense. You’ll find that there is something exceptional about them.”

“Monarch Silkworms?” The woman’s expression stirred and she doubtfully swept her spiritual sense past the cocoons. A short moment later, her expression relaxed.

“How about it? While these Monarch Silkworms are still in their cocoons, they should be more than enough for your uses.”

After a moment of hesitation, the woman put away the box and said, “With this, I will be able to fight in the wagered battle.”

Master Sunreach sighed with relief and smiled, “Good. With Fellow Daoist Bai’s Frostcloud Arts, she’ll be able to deal with those trifling spell warriors in a single move.”

Afterwards, the woman expressionlessly said, “I’ll be taking my leave,” before heading out of the hall.

Master Sunreach bitterly smiled and shook his head. When Wei Wuya saw this, he chuckled and said nothing else.

Once the woman left the hall, Master Sunreach focused on Han Li and asked with a smile, “Fellow Daoist Han, just how much Auric Essence do you require?”

With completely open intentions, Han Li said, “I require much of it. It can be said that the more, the better. Of course, since Auric Essence is quite valuable, so long as you two Fellow Daoists bring it to me, I’ll exchange it for an equivalent price. I definitely won’t have you suffer a loss.”

Master Sunreach chuckled. “From Fellow Daoist Han’s tone, it seems he possesses quite a bit of wealth. However, Fellow Daoist Han should know that at our realm, there are few items that are

able to tempt Fellow Daoist Wei and I. Otherwise, we wouldn't have relinquished so many of our worldly possessions for this war."

Han Li smiled and said nothing else. Instead, Wei Wuya sighed and suddenly spoke, "Fellow Daoist Sunreach, your tone may be bold, but Fellow Daoist Han was able to escape from a Moulan Divine Sage with only early Nascent Soul-stage cultivation. He is no ordinary cultivator."

Master Sunreach casually said, "Hehe, I've been rude. But regardless of what Fellow Daoist Han plans on using to trade for the Auric Essence, how about he first takes a look at it. If Fellow Daoist truly has an item that can tempt us, we'll have no objections trading it for the entirety of the Auric Essence."

He then reached for his storage pouch and a white light flew into his palm, revealing three various-sized chunks of golden rock that magnificently glowed. The middle-aged Daoist handed them over to Han Li in one move.

Han Li's heart pounded as he directly received the rocks, and he examined them with covetous desire.

The three chunks, one large and two small, were truly Auric Essence. The larger of the pieces was about the same size as the chunk that was auctioned off at the trade meet, about the size of a walnut. As for the smaller pieces, they were about half that size. This amount of Auric Essence should be enough for him to infuse tensome flying swords. However, it was somewhat lacking in quantity compared to what Han Li desired. Despite his calm expression, his eyes betrayed a trace of disappointment.

Master Sunreach was somewhat amazed to see this. Just how much Auric Essence did this man want? It was rather baffling. With that thought, he shot a glance at Wei Wuya.

Having seen Han Li's expression, he also glanced at Master Sunreach and calmly took out a fist-sized chunk of Auric Essence

from his sleeve.

When Han Li saw such a large chunk of Auric Essence in Wei Wuya's hand, he grew delighted. Although this chunk of Auric Essence wasn't enough for all seventy-two flying swords, with luck, this along with three smaller pieces should be enough for at least half of them. With thirty-six flying swords supported with the Swordlight Reflection Technique, it would be just enough for a small-scale Aureate Sword Formation.

With excitement in his heart, Han Li caught the chunk of Auric Essence that Wei Wuya tossed to him. After examining it with a deep breath, he said, "Although this may be all of your Auric Essence, it is still somewhat lacking. But it will be enough for me to participate in the wagered battle. Please take a look at these items and see if they are to your satisfaction."

After putting away the Auric Essence, he took out two differently colored jade boxes and handed them separately to Wei Wuya and Master Sunreach.

They each took the jade boxes and indifferently opened them. Wei Wuya weighted the box in his hand before opening it first.

One of the boxes had numerous scarlet fingernail-sized scales. The other box had a fist-sized jet-black tortoise shell. The two late Nascent Soul-stage cultivators were amazed by what they saw.

"What's this?"

"Demon beast materials!"

Han Li explained, "That's correct. Fellow Daoist Wei has the scales of a grade eight Venomous Flood Dragon. As for Fellow Daoist Sunreach, he possesses the shell of a grade eight demon tortoise. Although I don't dare to say these items are heaven-defying existences, these metamorphosed demon materials are rarely seen in the Heavenly South. They should be more than enough to trade for Auric Essence."

Although Han Li's tone was calm, he held much confidence. Grade eight demon beast materials were extremely hard to come by even in the Scattered Star Seas. Although many cultivators head out to the Outer Star Seas, very few were able to see demon beasts of that grade, let alone kill one.

And in the Heavenly South, grade seven and six demon beasts were killed as quickly as they appeared. None are left to ascent to grade eight stage. And apart from a few areas that large sects control, all other areas are devoid of any high-grade demon beasts.

Although Master Sunreach was able to quickly recover from his shock, Wei Wuya couldn't help but shout in delight, "The scales of a grade eight Venomous Flood Dragon!"

Han Li was stunned for a moment before soon recalling that Wei Wuya cultivated a venomous cultivation art. As the body of a Venomous Flood Dragon is particularly deadly, these scales might prove to have other miraculous uses for him.

Just as Han Li hesitated as to what to say, Wei Wuya hastily extended his fingers and fiddled with one of the crimson scales. After carefully examining them, he began to ponder what there was to gain.

Master Sunreach felt somewhat amazed by Wei Wuya's loss of demeanor. But after a strange expression appeared on his face, he smiled at Han Li and said, "Hehe! It seems Fellow Daoist Han's item is much to Brother Wei's liking. I am also rather interested in the tortoise shell. If these are true grade eight demon beast materials, they will be a fair trade for the Auric Essence as they are optimal materials for refining defensive magic tools."

Although he felt that Han Li's words weren't false, the sword-bearing Daoist found it hard to believe that an early Nascent Soul cultivator was able to acquire grade eight demon beast materials. He naturally had to determine whether or not the tortoise shell was genuine.

# Chapter 761: The Profound Goddess Palm

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Just as Han Li pondered, he heard a long sigh from Wei Wuya.

Wei Wuya put away the jade box in a flash of light and happily said, “Not bad. It is truly the scales of a metamorphosed Venomous Flood Dragon. This is very suitable for me. There is hope that my magic treasure will ascend to a whole new level.”

Afterwards, he raised his head to shot Han Li an appraising look. “To tell the truth, it is truly surprising to me that Fellow Daoist was able to produce such rare treasures. These Venomous Flood Dragon scales are particularly important to me. Although all we’ve done is trade for what we’ve needed, Fellow Daoist Han still must participate in the wagered battle on behalf of the Heavenly South. How about this? I still have one last piece of Auric Essence. I originally planned to give it to my descendants, but since Fellow Daoist Han requires it, I will give it to you. This way, I won’t be accused of taking advantage of you.” With a flip of his hand, he summoned an egg-sized piece of Auric Essence and tossed it to Han Li.

With the addition of this piece of Auric Essence, he would have more than enough to temper the thirty-six flying swords. His goals to taking out such rare materials had been achieved. It could be said these grade eight demon materials proved slightly more valuable than that of the Auric Essence. If they were take the materials and still have him fight in the wagered battle without further compensation, it would be rather unreasonable.

Of course, their intentions of acting so generously towards Han Li was obvious. As a Nascent Soul cultivator, he could simply pretend to agree and flee after taking the Auric Essence. If this were only a common trade that didn’t involve the wagered battle, they wouldn’t be able to do much else apart from complain.

At that moment, Master Sunreach finished appraising the item

and he wore a slight smile on his face. It seemed he was quite satisfied with the tortoise shell. However, when he saw Wei Wuya give him another piece of Auric Essence, he hesitantly muttered to himself for a moment before bringing out a six-inch-long yellow rootstalk that was as thick as a thumb.

Master Sunreach solemnly said, “From the wood attribute spiritual Qi that is overflowing from your body, I believe that Fellow Daoist’s main cultivation art is wood-attributed. I have nothing appropriate to give you, so I can only present to you a small piece of rootstalk from an ancient rattan palm. It will be greatly useful regardless of whether you refine it into a magic tool or use it to nourish your body’s wood-attribute spiritual Qi. It should be enough to compensate you for the grade eight demon tortoise shell.”

Wei Wuya revealed an expression of astonishment when he saw this item. “Yi! That is...”

Han Li was initially disappointed, but when he saw Wei Wuya’s change of expression, his mind stirred in thought. An ancient rattan palm? Could it be that Profound Goddess Palm that the Righteous and Devil Dao wished to resurrect with the Spirit Root Tree’s Wine Nectar? Han Li glanced at the item in his hand with astonishment.

Master Sunreach wasn’t surprised to see that Wei Wuya recognized this item. He calmly said, “With Brother Han’s status, he should know of the Profound Goddess Palm that appeared in this world. It is a pity that despite our efforts, we were unable to bring it back to life. In the end, we were only able to divide up the pieces of the rattan palm with the Devil Dao and treat it as tool refinement materials. This is one quarter of the palm’s rootstalk.”

“The Profound Goddess Palm!” Han Li caught the yellow rootstalk and muttered to himself with surprise.

Han Li learned of the Profound Goddess Palm from several

ancient records. He now realized why the Righteous and Devil Dao had schemed to resurrect it.

Immortal rattan palms were only a general classifier for these plants. They were merely a vine-type spiritual root that were useful.

However, the Profound Goddess Palm was different. Only a few such ancient rattan palms had the qualifications to be named as profound. Profound rattan vines belonged to a completely different realm, and came into creation during times of antiquity. As such, any fruits or flowers it may produce possessed inconceivable effects that were truly heaven-defying.

However, the Profound Goddess Palm were one of such roots that possessed amazing effects, but as it had perished long ago, its husk was indistinguishable from other rattan palms. Were it not for the explanation that was left behind in the ancient cultivator burrow where it was found, it would've been assumed to be an ordinary rattan palm husk.

At the start, it was believed to be a precious treasure. Even the Righteous and Devil Dao has fought several times for the possession of the treasure. Later on, the higher echelon of the Righteous and the Devil Dao decided to first see whether or not the immortal rattan was able of being resurrected. After all, even if it was resurrected, it could take tens of thousands of years before it would bear fruit or flowers.

As a result, they first tried several different methods in their attempts to bring it back to life and they later used spirit water and milk to water it. They even used Wine Nectar from the Spirit Root Tree of the Dreamcloud Mountains. However, all these efforts were in vain as the immortal rattan showed no sign of coming back to life.

With dashed hopes, the Devil and Righteous Dao decided to divide the stalk and branches into tensome pieces and even divide

them between each party. As for how Master Sunreach acquired a piece of the rootstalk, it was offered as tribute in an attempt to curry favor with him, the grand elder of the Righteous Dao Alliance.

As for how Wei Wuya recognized it, he also had a section of the immortal rattan, but it was only a small portion of its branch. Through a series of trades, it had eventually made its way into Wei Wuya's hands.

Since the pieces of the Profound Goddess Palm couldn't be resurrected, they could only be used as top grade materials at best, greatly decreasing its value in Master Sunreach's point of view. Additionally, since it was a wood-attribute material and wasn't well-suited for his own cultivation arts, he gave it to Han Li without much consideration.

Wei Wuya soon realized what Master Sunreach also thought, and his surprise soon disappeared.

Although he knew of the origins of the rattan rootstalk, Han Li only felt slight disappointment.

He currently had no lack of top grade tool refinement materials. He only desired to acquire more Auric Essence, and it was for that reason that he took out the grade eight demon materials. Since he didn't have the time to nurture his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords nor the spiritual power to refine a new magic treasure, it was currently better for him to receive ancient treasures instead if Auric Essence was out of the question. But since Master Sunreach truly didn't possess any Auric essence, he offered the rootstalk of the Profound Goddess Palm, something that was also quite precious. As a result, Han Li simply took the box without another word and peered inside of it.

His current plan for it was to make use of the small green bottle when he returned to his cave residence and attempt to mature the rattan palm. The green liquid born from the small mysterious

bottle was unfathomable, and was even able to mature the three divine trees. Perhaps it would be able to create a miracle of reviving the Profound Goddess Palm. Although the chances were small, it would be an enormous windfall if it succeeded. As a result, his initial disappointment faded away.[1] Golden Lightning Bamboo(acquired from Violet Spirit), Soul Nurturing Tree(acquired from Heavenvoid Hall and Yuan Yao), and the Spirit Well Tree(Dreamcloud Mountains).

Before Wei Wuya and Master Sunreach further spoke, Han Li sighed and tactfully said, “Since I’ve acquired the Auric Essence, I will naturally participate in the wagered battles in seven days. Since the hour is late, I will be returning first. I must make preparations for the coming war.”

Master Sunreach smiled and politely said, “I didn’t think that Fellow Daoist Han would be such an impatient character. The war is important so it is only natural to want to prepare yourself. We won’t keep you here any longer.”

Han Li promptly nodded and saluted them before quickly heading to the hall’s exit. But before Han Li could made his way outside, Wei Wuya stared at him with a strange expression and moved his lips, sending a series of voice transmissions towards him. “Fellow Daoist Han, on behalf of these Venomous Flood Dragon Scales, I will overlook the matter of you stealing away Fellow Daoist Nangong. As it wasn’t meant to be between Fairy Nangong and my nephew, there was nothing that could be done!”

When Han Li heard this, he couldn’t help but stop in his tracks. He then felt a wave of delight, and quickly walked out the hall without turning around. Once Han Li could no longer be seen, Master Sunreach and Wei Wuya glanced at each other in silence.

A short moment later, Master Sunreach slowly said, “What do you think? I found it truly inconceivable Han Li would actually bring out grade eight demon beast materials. Could it be in the time he disappeared through the ancient transportation

formation, he acquired the complete legacy of an ancient cultivator? How else was he able to reach early Nascent Soul stage in such a short amount of time? Not to mention the many treasures he possesses.”

Wei Wuya wryly smiled. “It is possible! But this has little to do with us. He is not the only person that has inherited ancient cultivation arts and ancient treasures. Having such a rare chance is a truly envious matter. Don’t tell me you’re thinking about killing him to take his treasures?”

Master Sunreach chuckled and shook his head. “Kill him? Brother Wei can sure tell a joke. Let alone during a time of war, this can’t be done during peacetime either. Based solely on his ability to escape a Moulan Divine Sage, I’d be stirring up trouble without reaping any gains. Besides, his treasures may be precious, but would they allow me to breakthrough to Deity Transformation stage? Besides, the Heavenly Dao Union and those pair cultivators aren’t easily trifled with.”

# Chapter 762: Spirit Talisman

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As Wei Wuya and Master Sunreach remained behind and had a casual discussion about Han Li, the person in question had already arrived outside. To his surprise, Han Li caught sight of Dong Xuan'er.

The woman was standing outside the hall with a lowered head as if she were thinking about something. The cultivators standing guard had ignored her since she had arrived with Devil Cloudbreak.

When she saw Han Li arrive, it stirred a reaction from Dong Xuan'er. She wore an odd expression on her face and appeared to be at a loss. A trace of resentment could also be faintly made out.

Han Li felt somewhat bewildered and couldn't make much sense of the matter. Regardless, Han Li promptly walked past her as if he hadn't seen her and slowly walked towards the distant street. She simply stood in place, biting her lips, and watched Han Li in silence as he left.

After making a turn, he sensed her gaze had left him, and he shook his head with a frown.

Silvermoon's puzzled voice echoed from the back of his mind. "Master, you recognize that female cultivator?"

Han Li casually replied, "She was an old acquaintance. But our relationship couldn't be considered good."

"Is that so? From her expression, it appeared your relationship with her was unordinary. Could it be Master once..." Silvermoon smiled and deliberately trailed off.

"Enough nonsense. I have a poor impression of the woman, and we were even once enemies." Han Li grew annoyed and coldly snorted.

Silvermoon wryly smiled in response and tactfully kept silent.

Ever since Han Li saved Silvermoon and remained silent on the matter of the Purple Cloudlace and the ancient flower basket being seized, Silvermoon grew far more intimate with Han Li. Although she didn't dare to be too imprudent with him, she spoke far more openly with Han Li. Of course, he also sensed this and felt more trustful with her in turn, resulting in a much closer relationship between the two.

After returning back to the Drifting Cloud Sect encampment, Han Li had a quick discussion with Lu Luo about the meeting.

Lu Luo wore a worried expression. "There is no need for Junior Martial Brother to risk participating in the wagered battle. It is true that Auric Essence is rare, but you only has one life to lose. This is far from good!"

Han Li smiled and carelessly said, "Senior Martial Brother Lu, please relax. I am confident that I'll make it through the battle in one piece. Why else would I have agreed so quickly? However, I won't be able to pay much mind to the safety of our sect disciples before the battle. Senior Martial Brother Lu will have to look after them alone."

Having heard Han Li, Lu Luo wore a relaxed expression. "In the battle next week, I will naturally look after the sect disciples. Please don't worry about them. Since Junior Martial Brother is confident in the wagered battle, I won't speak further of it. However, I must ask if there is anything that you would like any sect disciples to perform."

Han Li smiled. After a moment of thought, Han Li slowly said, "For the coming battle, I will need to perform a few preparations. There are a few particular materials that I'll need my Junior Martial Nephews to gather for me." Han Li bluntly took out a jade slip he had already prepared and handed it over to Lu Luo.

Lu Luo took the jade slip and resolutely said, "Rest assured. So long as they can be found in Skyfirst City, I will have these

materials gathered for you.”

Warmed by his words, Han Li nodded and chatted a bit before taking his leave.

The jade slip that he gave Lu Luo detailed the supplementary materials for the [Spirit Subjugation Talisman](#). On the way back to the encampment, he had came to a conclusion that while he should have no problem with the wagered battle given his current abilities, he always felt it best to tread with caution and that he should make what preparations he could; the Spirit Subjugation Talisman being one of them.

In the Umbra Realm, he received the talisman refinement method for a grand talisman.

It would be the sole killing move that he would be able to prepare within several days time. His only worry was the odds of success for refining it. As for tempering his flying swords with Auric Essence and cultivating the Aureate Sword Formation, that wasn't something that could be accomplished in a sparse few days.

He originally thought to find a satisfactory spirit talisman brush and have some more practice honing his talisman refinement techniques before attempting to create the Spirit Subjugation Talisman. But now that he only had a few days, he had to make an attempt despite the lower chances of success. If he could successfully refine it, he would have another killing move. If he failed, nothing could be done about it. Any other preparations he could make over the next few days wouldn't be able to increase his strength.

With that thought, Han Li calmly arrived at his assigned residence and entered his bedroom. He then sat cross-legged on his bed and closed his eyes.

In a mere two days, Han Li had acquired all of the materials that he had requested. He was delighted and felt reassured of his decision to become a Drifting Cloud Sect Elder.

With these materials on hand, Han Li moved to a sealed room. After taking a seat cross-legged at the center of the room, he placed each of the materials in front of him and carefully opened a black-green bottle that he took out from his storage pouch.

With a woosh, a streak of crimson light shot out from the bottle. Already prepared, Han Li calmly raised his hand and grasped at the air. A large hand of azure light appeared soon after and grabbed the crimson ball of light. The azure light hand then pulsed with light and trembled, revealing the crimson light's true form. It was a crimson flood dragon that was several inches long. It continuously swiveled at the center of the palm and would occasionally attempt to escape, but the surrounding walls of azure light firmly trapped the flood dragon like a bird to a cage.

Han Li narrowed his eyes and blue light shined from his pupils. He was able to instantly view every detail of the flood dragon's soul. It appeared lively and exactly the same as when he had captured it tens of years ago. But with his Brightsight Spirit Eyes, he was able to see something exceptional.

Although the power of the flood dragon's soul still remained astonishingly strong, the light in its eyes had dulled. Clearly, its intelligence had waned. Now, the soul merely had power, but its mind was exactly the same as an unevolved flood dragon. Its attempts to escape were only born from instinct.

Han Li sighed and recalled the grade eight Venomous Flood Dragon and its immense abilities; it was now reduced to a feral soul only over the passage of tens of years. The contrast was so great that it nearly invoked pity! This led Han Li to be particularly mindful of immense challenges on the path of cultivation. If he were to one day lose his flesh body and his primal soul fell into the hands of an enemy he may find himself in the same situation as this Venomous Flood Dragon.

Han Li sat down in silence for a moment longer and sighed. With a shake of his hand, he had the crimson flood dragon appear three

meters above his head, remaining trapped in place within a barrier of azure light.

Paying no further attention to the Venomous Flood Dragon soul, Han Li lowered his head to look at the materials before him. He pointed to the emerald-green hide of an unknown spirit beast and had it fly over towards him.

With a bright glint from his eyes, he opened his mouth and spat out a sliver of azure Nascent flame onto the spirit beast hide. Oddly enough, the flames didn't burn the spirit beast hide but enveloped it.

Han Li clutched both of his hands in an incantation gesture and began to continuously flick his fingers, striking the spirit beast hide with a barrage of spell seals. The Nascent flame continuously flickered and pulsed with light. Han Li then ceased his casting incantation gestures and pointed his finger at a white jade box. The box flew over to him and opened to reveal a pile of sparkling silver powder.

He flicked at the jade box, sending a small portion of the silver powder directly into the azure Nascent flames, bringing forth silver embers within the flames. With further control from Han Li's incantation gestures, the flames drew the spirit beast hide to its center, transforming the hide into a huge silver lotus flower that slowly swiveled in the flames.

Han Li's expression grew increasingly solemn and began to point to each of the containers in front of them; various materials dazzlingly burned as they entered the fire. As they burned, the spirit beast hide turned silver to black, then black to green. Then when it turned crimson, Han Li breathed out and ceased pouring in the materials, and instead began to mutter.

At the same time, several of his fingers trembled, shooting out several threads of slim azure light from his fingertips, directly striking the surface of the spirit beast hide. Now under the azure

threads' control, the spirit beast hide ceased revolving and began to sway with a strange momentum.

As Han Li continued his incantation, the spirit beast hide began to release slivers of black Qi and shrink by a small amount. When the black Qi touched the crimson Nascent flame, they burned and released a faintly fishy scent in the air.

Han Li seemed to ignore this and continued maintaining the flames for two hours. When the last sliver of black Qi from the spirit beast hide had been refined, Han Li's expression finally relaxed and he sighed with relief.

He tossed several more materials into the flame and had them burn for a moment more. Then as Han Li's gaze flickered, the flames were suddenly extinguished with a pop, revealing a crimson spirit hide. At this moment, it was only the size of the palm of a hand.

Han Li was satisfied to the chances to the spirit hide. He then pointed to the flood dragon soul above him without the slightest hesitation and had the barrier surrounding it scatter into specks of light. Then through some invisible force, it was sucked into the crimson spirit hide.

With a puff, it disappeared without a trace.

# Chapter 763: The Arrival of Battle

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With the flood dragon soul absorbed by the spirit hide, Han Li flipped his hand, summoning a sparkling blue talisman brush into his palm. It was seven inches long and was exquisitely created. With his other hand, he beckoned to a blue jade box and summoned a ball of golden liquid from the case.

Han Li quickly dipped the brush in the floating liquid and his expression froze as he concentrated on the spirit hide. He then began to sweep his brush through the air with great familiarity.

Series of cryptic golden talisman characters began to flow from the tip of the brush and directly bore into the spirit hide. Soon after, various talisman characters began to emerge above the spirit hide in orderly lines, each glistening with golden light.

Just as these talisman characters began to appear, the spirit hide began to fiercely shake, emitting dragon roars from within. Protrusions then began to appear on the surface of it. Soon after the crimson flood dragon emerged from the spirit hide and attempted to escape with all its might.

But in that instant, the golden talisman characters on top of it brightly shined and contorted, tightly constricting the flood dragon soul and dragging it back.

Although the flood dragon soul has lost its intelligence, it was still the soul of a worldly spirit beast. Its instincts detected danger and continuously attempted to break free of the golden talisman characters. At that moment, Han Li began to draw talisman characters with increased speed and more golden talisman characters directly enveloped the flood dragon, quickly overpowering it and pushing it back into the spirit hide.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Han Li took out a bottle of purple liquid and dipped his brush in it. He then calmly began to write an odd symbol.

Following that, Han Li exchanged the cinnabar he used to write with his brush as he continued to write talisman characters. Not long after, the spirit hide talisman paper flashed with dense bursts of various colored light as it soared with spiritual Qi.

Han Li's expression grew increasingly solemn and his brush strokes started to slow, his eyes shining with blue light as he utilized the Brightsight Spirit Eyes to their greatest extent.

Just after a single crimson talisman character was drawn onto the spirit hide, a wave of increasingly frantic spiritual Qi fluctuations suddenly emerged from the half-finished spirit talisman.

Han Li's expression greatly changed as he began to inwardly curse. Without a further thought, he swept his sleeve sending out a cloud of azure Qi, instantly recalling all of the materials. At that same moment, he swept his other hand towards himself, summoning a small blue shield. It expanded in the blink of an eye and blocked his front.

As Han Li finished all of this, the crimson spirit hide exploded, releasing deafening dragon roars. Rainbow light dazzlingly shined as a huge wave of astonishing spiritual Qi struck the blue shield.

Glowing with light, the large shield unwaveringly blocked the attack, somewhat to Han Li's surprise. He reckoned that due to the spirit talisman's immense power, the explosion that resulted from its failure would contain equivalently destructive force. It had been beyond his expectations for the attack to be so easily blocked.

During Han Li's bewilderment, a streak of crimson light shot towards the ceiling of the sealed room in an attempt to escape. But just as the red streak touched the ceiling, a layer of white light blocked its way, causing it to rebound.

Han Li was overjoyed at the sight of the flood dragon soul and raised his hand without any further thought. He grabbed at the air, summoning a hand of azure light to emerge above the flood dragon

soul and grab it. He then pointed to the shield and had it quickly shrink with blue ripples of light before returning into his sleeve.

Afterwards, Han Li again examined the re-captured flood dragon soul with the Brightsight Spirit Eyes.

“Yi!” Han Li yelped with astonishment. Although it still appeared to have the original soul, its strength was far weaker. The crimson flood dragon soul also appeared listless.

Han Li glanced at the flood dragon soul and stroked his chin with a pensive expression. The failure to refine the Spirit Subjugation Talisman hadn’t resulted in the immediate destruction of the soul; it merely caused it to suffer a slight loss in strength. But in this case, he could make several attempts to create the talisman despite how difficult it may be to refine it. Of course, after each attempt, the soul would grow weaker and the power of the spirit talisman was sure to decrease as well.

After pondering this, Han Li sighed with relief. Even if the soul decreased in power, it may prove easier to refine if the flood dragon soul was weakened. There was some fortune to be had from his failed talisman refinement.

Han Li wryly smiled and began to take out another set of supplementary materials, and exchange the spirit beast hide for a new one.

He then set his mind of refining a new spirit beast hide.

As Han Li painstakingly attempted to refine the Spirit Subjugation Talisman over the span of three days, the entirety of Skyfirst City began to mobilize.

All sects and cultivators knew that there was about to be a great and decisive battle coming in a few days. After a period of disorder, the cultivators in the city began to leave their sect encampments and solemnly brought themselves to the assigned divisions of the cultivator army.

They all knew that if they didn't win this battle and push back the Moulan, they would invade the Heavenly South. It would bring about the end of countless sects and legacies. As a result, their morale was at their peak without any need to rally them. As for the ten wagered battles, news of that had also quickly spread around.

Out of fear that Moulan spies would leak the identity of the cultivators who would fight in the wagered battles, the names of those fighting were kept confidential. Apart from the eccentrics that participated in the meeting, no one would know of the ten that would fight.

Of course, the identity of these ten Nascent Soul stage cultivators were of greatly discussed amongst many cultivators as well as their potential chances of winning. After all, the survival of about a thousand cultivators depended on them. Those who had fellow sect members among the cultivators were particularly concerned over the matter.

As for the Drifting Cloud Sect disciples, they left Skyfirst City along with the divisions they were assigned to — with the exception of Cultivator Song who was ordered to stay behind and wait for Han Li. As for Lu Luo, he followed after the rest of the Drifting Cloud Sect with lack of a better choice.

Not long after, Skyfirst City was empty apart for a sparse few cultivators standing guard.

As a few more days passed by, Cultivator Song couldn't help but grow nervous. Han Li had yet to emerge and she could faintly hear dragon cries and explosions coming from his heavily protected residence, much to her worry.

On the fifth day, Cultivator Song decided that if her Martial Uncle Han didn't emerge from seclusion, she would have to summon the courage to force her way inside. If she waited another day, it was possible that they wouldn't make it to the battle.

At that moment, Cultivator Song was sitting in the main hall of

the sect encampment as worried weighed on her mind. She occasionally looked outside the hall, and faintly saw the glow of the setting sun. Her expression wavered as the sky gradually grew darker. She then stood up and bit her lips with a frown.

But before she could leave the hall, she heard a series of clear bell rings from outside. She soon wore an expression of delight.

A short moment later, Han Li suddenly appeared in a flash of azure light.

“I pay my respects to Martial Uncle Han!” Cultivator Song quickly stepped forward and curtsied.

“How many days has it been? Nearly all the cultivators in the city are gone.” When Han Li emerged from the sealed room, he swept his spiritual sense past the city and discovered that there were only a few cultivators left. While he was in the room, he could only feel a loose passage of time. Although he felt that the scheduled date had yet to arrive, he felt it best to make certain.

Feeling much more at ease, Cultivator Song respectfully replied, “Reporting to Senior, today is the fifth day.”

Han Li decisively said, “The fifth day. We have more than enough time, but it is better to be early. Let’s go.”

“As you command!”

Han Li waved his hand and a streak of white light flew out from his sleeve into the courtyard outside. The light faded away to reveal a winged white carriage, the Wind Riding Chariot.

Han Li’s figure blurred and he reappeared inside. He turned to the woman and said, “Come in. It will be faster to travel in this than flying with light.”

Cultivator Song shot an appraising glance at the carriage and silently entered it with slight surprise on her face. Afterwards, Han Li lightly tapped his foot, causing the Wind Riding Chariot to glow and envelope itself in a layer of white light. Then with a tremble, it

shot through the skies.

The Wind Riding Chariot was worthy of being a treasure specialized in flight. Not only did it consume a small amount of magic power, it flew far more quickly than an ordinary cultivator could. In the blink of an eye, they had already left Skyfirst City.

Cultivator Song was very relieved at the sight of this. She also couldn't help but wonder if this treasure was the reason why her Martial Uncle Han appeared so relaxed. Did this unfathomable martial uncle of hers managed to cultivate some formidable secret in the last few days? Just what were those explosions and dragon roars coming from the room?

Just as this woman pondered in silence and allowed her imagination to run wild, Han Li asked her a question, much to her surprise. "Is Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit still where they previously were?"

After a pause, Cultivator Song obediently replied, "Violet Spirit and Mei Ning had decided to leave Skyfirst City for the time being and decide what to do once the war is over."

"Hehe! That girl Violet Spirit is rather clever, this was a truly wise decision. If I were in her shoes, I'd be doing the exact same."

Soon after, he poured more spiritual power into his foot and propelled the Wind Riding Chariot at even greater speeds. Cultivator Song revealed shock as they soon tore through the skies and disappeared past the horizon.

# Chapter 764: Martial Niece Xiao

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Several days ago, on the border of the States of Yu and Beiliang, the armies of cultivators and spell warriors commanded a flurry of magic tools and treasures carve into the earth, forming an extension of their original fortresses into massive war camps several tens of kilometers away from each other.

In a single night, the area underwent a sweeping change. This deserted area was suddenly surging with men and murderous desire. There were even small groups of cultivators and spell warriors that patrolled around the war camps, wary of any surprise attacks the other side may bring.

Afterwards, even more cultivators and spell warriors began to gather here with each passing day, and various spell formations were placed along each side of the border, adding even more tension in the air. But at the center of the border, there would occasionally be spell warrior and cultivator patrols that encountered each other. Although they coldly glared at each other, they were able to restrain themselves from fighting. After all, fighting now wouldn't accomplish anything. As such, they begrudgingly stifled their bloodthirst and waited for the decisive day.

On the sixth day, the Heavenly South and the Moulan had finished placing down their grand formations, and they started to send their troops to probe the enemy, greatly decreasing the number of idle troops in camp. However, high-grade cultivators have also begun to accompany the patrols. Meanwhile, the higher echelons of both the Moulan and the Heavenly South began to nervously draft their plans for war.

As Skyfirst City was to the north of the cultivator war camp, it was natural that there were fewer restrictions placed there, but there were sentries and patrols placed there to a greater degree to compensate for it. As such, there was a group of over ten

cultivators that was calmly patrolling an area over ten kilometers north from the war camp.

The cultivator in charge was a beautiful woman that appeared to be in her twenties. She was an early Core Formation cultivator and her subordinates were all Foundation Establishment cultivators. With the battle soon to come, none of them dared to be careless. Although this was only a routine patrol, the party was well alert. Only their leader appeared calm, but with her powerful spiritual sense, she was able to detect her surroundings clearly.

Suddenly, the woman's expression stirred and she suddenly came to a stop. She glanced in the distant sky with an astonished expression, her subordinates soon following suit. Despite having not seen anything, they still maintained a lookout.

"Senior Xiao, what—" Before the blue-robed cultivator could finish his question, a streak of white light suddenly flickered from across the sky, quickly traveling before them.

"Such speed!" One of the cultivators cried out in shock. In nearly the blink of an eye, the light streak grew far brighter and something could be made out from within it.

"It should be that Senior who stayed behind. But according to our rules, we must question him. You can wait here for now." The young woman spoke without the slightest fear. She then flew forward in the flash of yellow light.

The subordinate cultivators blankly glanced at each other during this time and remained silent. They didn't belong to the same sect as the woman and they didn't dare to raise any objections due to their inferior cultivation.

The woman stopped after flying for a short while and waited for the streak of white light to arrive. When the white light stopped, she could see a strange carriage within it due to the short distance between them.

“Junior is Yellow Maple Valley’s Xiao Cui’er. Greetings Senior. Junior is under orders to ask for your name. I hope for your understanding.”

“Yi! Xiao Cui’er?” A voice spoke with astonishment from within the white light.

“Does Senior recognize this Junior?” Xiao Cui’er blinked and wore an expression of astonishment. His voice wasn’t among the Nascent Soul cultivators that she knew, but it seemed awfully familiar.

As the woman gazed at the white light in shock, it faded away to reveal its true appearance.

It was a strange white carriage with a young man and woman standing within it. The man was wearing long azure robes and had a common appearance. The woman was gorgeous and wore white.

“Martial Uncle Han!” When she saw the azure-robed man, Xiao Cui’er covered her mouth and shouted in surprise. Her eyes were in complete disbelief.

“Little girl, you’ve grown. You’re quite different from when I last saw you.” Han Li examined the woman and wore a faint smile.

“Martial Uncle Han, it really is you! Although Senior Martial Sister Nie and Senior Martial Brother Lei had mentioned that Martial Uncle Han had formed a Nascent Soul, I had found it somewhat difficult to believe.” Xiao Cui’er spoke with delight, her expression reminiscent of when she was still young.

“It was the only chance that I had encountered them at the time,” Han Li said with a smile. In the past, he had recommended this woman to enter Yellow Maple Valley. Although he hadn’t spoken with her much, he felt somewhat close to her — unlike with Nie Ying and Lei Wanhe — as she was the succeeding disciple of his Senior Martial Brother Ma.

When Cultivator Song saw this, her mind began to stir. She

recalled hearing that her Martial Uncle Han was once a disciple of Yellow Maple Valley. It seemed he had encountered an old acquaintance. What relationship did they have?

Without heed of Cultivator Song, Han Li and Xiao Cui'er had a warm chat of the past. She had mentioned how she had escaped pursuit from the Devil Dao with his Senior Martial Brother Ma and how they returned to Yellow Maple Valley, as well as how Senior Martial Brother Ma had passed away in meditation and how she managed to form a golden core. The conversation reminded how much the world had changed around Han Li.

But a short moment later, Xiao Cui'er hesitated for a moment before asking, "Martial Uncle, have you truly become a Drifting Cloud Sect Elder? Can you not return?" She appeared to be faintly hopeful when she said this.

Yellow Maple Valley had found themselves in an awkward position. Although they still had Ancestor Linghu watching over the sect, there were no other Nascent Soul cultivators to succeed him. When he reached the end of his lifespan, Yellow Maple Valley's position among the Six Sects of Yue will surely fall. This is much to the worry of the Yellow Maple Valley Core Formation cultivators, Xiao Cui'er not excluded.

Knowing that she had the best relationship with Han Li, the sect decided for Xiao Cui'er to raise the matter the next time she saw him, hoping that their old relationship would stir him. She couldn't help but raise the matter again despite Han Li's previous refusal with Lei Wanhe.

Han Li's smile disappeared and he shook his head. "I cannot return. The Drifting Cloud Sect has treated me quite well. It's better to not mention this matter any further."

Xiao Cui'er's expression dimmed. "But our Yellow Maple Valley will..."

Han Li sighed. "You don't need to worry too much. I've already

made an agreement with Ancestor Linghu. If Yellow Maple Valley encounters any danger, I will be able to help you if it's within my abilities.”

Xiao Cui’er’s spirits quickly returned after hearing him. “So it was like that! Many thanks, Martial Uncle!”

After some thought, Han Li took out an emerald ring and a bottle of medicine pills. “You’re thanking me too early. Since you were Senior Martial Brother Ma’s sole disciple and I haven’t seen you for so long, I can’t just leave you be. Take this. It’s a magic treasure that I acquired after killing a Core Formation cultivator. Although you cannot use it as your bonded magic treasure, it will be effective in battle after you refine it. And here are some medicine pills for your cultivation. It is effective in breaking through bottlenecks.”

“Many thanks for Senior Martial Uncle’s gift!” Xiao Cui’er deeply bowed to him before happily receiving the two items.

“Alright, I will be heading to the war camp now. It’s best that I don’t keep those old eccentrics waiting. If chance will have it, I’ll see you again.” Once he gave her the items, he bid his leave and streaked through the skies before Xiao Cui’er had another opportunity to speak.

“Farewell Martial Uncle Han!” With the carriage having already left, Xiao Cui’er could only curtsy in a hurry. Afterwards, she remained in the air as she watched the streak of light drift off into the horizon.

At that moment, her subordinates finally approached her.

“Senior Xiao, who was that Senior? Was he a Nascent Soul cultivator?”

“However, he appeared to be quite young.” The cultivators gathered around and began to curiously talk among themselves.

Xiao Cui’er recalled her spiritual sense and her expression grew sullen. She icily swept her gaze past her subordinates and said,

“Don’t speak further of it. He is a Nascent Soul Senior and he had treated me with great kindness in the past. He isn’t someone to be gossiped about. Let’s continue our patrol.” Her subordinates immediate ceased speaking.

With the Wind Riding Chariot’s great speed, they arrived near the war camp border after a short moment. Disliking how eye-catching the chariot was, Han Li put it away and decided to enter the war camp using personal flight. During this time, Cultivator Song tactfully kept silent about the previous event, to Han Li’s approval.

The two soon arrived before a huge light barrier. It was dense and brightly shined with various-colored light. It covered the entire war camp.

Before he released Cultivator Song from his flight light, a cultivator standing guard hastily welcomed him. Once Han Li’s identity was confirmed, he promptly opened a passage for them.

Han Li parted ways with Cultivator Song once they entered. She went to report to Lu Luo before later joining the division of cultivators she was assigned to. As for Han Li, he went to the heart of the war camp where Master Sunreach and the others were waiting for him.

They were pleased to see that Han Li had arrived. After a few polite greetings, they informed him of a few of the arrangements in the coming battle. But since he wasn’t particularly interested, he soon took his leave. He then headed to a temporarily stone room and sat cross-legged, honing his spirit and strength.

# Chapter 765: Enemies

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Han Li calmly sat down in the room. As time obviously passed by, the spiritual power he consumed on his way here had slowly recovered.

When he opened his eyes once more, he wore a faint smile. Ever since his Azure Essence Sword Arts had been cultivated to the tenth layer, he could clearly feel his spiritual power returning far faster than normal. It had come as a pleasant surprise.

With that thought, Han Li muttered to himself for a moment and he took out a wooden box that shined with black light. The box had several restriction talismans sealing it as they sparkled with azure light. With a sweep of his hand, the talismans flew off the box and into his sleeve.

He then tapped the box and had it open to reveal what was inside. It was a palm-sized talisman that was covered in characters. There was also a small crimson flood dragon that could be faintly seen, roaming across its surface.

Han Li extended his hand and beckoned to the talisman, having it fly into his hand.

In the last few days, he had failed three times before finally refining the talisman. Although he didn't know how powerful it was, it was certainly weaker than what was described of the past Spirit Subjugation Talismans. After all, the flood dragon soul was greatly weakened from his three failed attempts, but in the end, he would only be able to test its true strength in battle.

Han Li gently stroked the various characters written on the talisman's surface and sank deep into thought, his expressions changing with his thoughts.

As Han Li sat pondering in the room, there were several mysterious figures discussing something in a room underground,

several tens of kilometers away in the Moulan Encampment.

There were five men and two women. Among them, there was one man and one woman who concealed themselves with black robes. Two of the unconcealed spell warriors were recognizable to Han Li: the woman surnamed Le — the wielder of the ancient lantern who he had fought at the Yellow Drag on Mountains, and the middle-aged scholarly man who pursued him for several days without end, the Divine Sage. As for the other three, one was a shriveled old man with dark skin, a short man that wasn't even four feet tall, and a large embroidered-robed man with a majestic appearance.

“Sage Le, how are the spirit oil preparations? You should know that the holy bird can only appear in this world as long as the sacred lantern burns. There can't be any mistakes.” Despite the wrinkles on the old man's face, his eyes were bright and clear.

The green-robed woman surnamed Le respectfully replied, “Divine Sage Zhu, please don't worry. My clan is treating this battle as a matter of life or death. We've brought out all the spirit oil that my clan has produced for over a thousand years. It should be enough to employ the holy bird for the battle.”

The old man then turned his questions to the middle-aged scholarly man. “Brother Zhong, were there any problems with organizing the grand spirit technique formations? As our magic tools are inferior in number to the cultivators of the Heavenly South, we must rely on the spirit technique formations to suppress them.”

The scholarly man calmly replied, “There is no problem. The hundreds of years I've spent researching spell technique formations weren't in vain. I've already organized several new grand formations for the assault. If the Heavenly South cultivators are expecting the spirit technique formations of the past, they will certainly suffer.”

"This will do. Brother Bi, once the melee starts, have the high-grade spell warriors summon the void spirit beasts to charge. Have them absorb the cultivators' attacks and waste as much of their magic power as possible." The old man gave a quick word to the short man before turning towards the black-robed man and politely saying, "Sect Master Fang, we will need your huge beasts' cooperation."

"Before the battle starts, I will give these huge beasts to you. However, I hope you will not back out of what we agreed on." The black-robed man's final words were laced with a deeper meaning.

The shriveled old man's expression stirred and he callously said, "Back out? Brother Fang must be joking. How could we be so foolish as to offend your esteemed sect before the battle with the cultivators? In any case, your Sifting Yin Sect is one of the ten great devilish sects of the Jin Empire. When our Moulan Tribes seize the Heavenly South, we will pay back the debt as greatly as we can, as it isn't such a big matter to allow you to manage a few mortal countries. As for the mortals of the Yan Clan, we don't care about their lives in the slightest."

The black-robed man nodded and emotionlessly said, "That is good. Were if not for those Righteous Dao fellows destroying our sect protecting treasure, we wouldn't need a large number of living souls to restore it. As such, we wouldn't have felt the need to participate in your war with the Heavenly South cultivators. Collecting a vast quantity of living souls in the Jin Empire will certainly attract trouble from the Righteous Dao. Although we have no fear of them, it would delay the treasure's restoration."

The black-robed woman added on, "Additionally, all the cultivator's souls who die in this battle will belong to my sect. Surely Divine Sage Zhu won't have any objections to this?" She spoke with a hoarse and raspy voice much in contrast to her petite figure, much to the shock of those who heard her.

When the old man heard him, his expression slightly stirred. "Of

course, we have little concerns with what will happen to the souls of cultivators, but will you be able to identify them differently from our spell warriors? While we have turned a blind eye to your unrestrained collection of souls lost in previous battles, we wish for this one to turn out differently. We'll compensate you in other ways instead..”

“This is impossible. The souls of cultivators and spell warriors don't have any differences between them. Even if there was a method, there will be tens of thousands of lives lost tomorrow, yet you want us to differentiate each one. Do you three Divine Sages plan on breaking our agreement?” The black-robed man narrowed his eyes and his eyes instantly glowed with green light. A sinister and cold Qi rose from his body.

When the scholarly man surnamed Zhong and the short man surnamed Bi saw this, they were inwardly furious. Although they didn't take any action, their bodies faintly shined with silver and red light respectively as they stared at the black-robed man. As for the large embroidered-robed man and the woman surnamed Le, they both stared daggers at the black-robed man as they wore displeased expressions on their faces.

They have long been resentful of the fact at having the soul of spell warriors being collected. It was perhaps inevitable that there would be a falling out with these Devil Dao cultivators from the Jin Empire.

The old man sighed and his face grew solemn. “Cease! What are you doing? Sect Master Fang is a guest that I had personally invited. Could it be that you do not hold me in any regard?”

The black-robed woman to the side sent a voice transmission to the black-robed man. When he heard this, the green light in his eyes withdrew and his strange aura faded away.

The others sighed upon seeing this and released the spiritual power in their bodies. They clearly understood that while these

devilish cultivators were displeasing to the eye, they were a necessity, not to mention that it wasn't a good time for any internal strife.

With some further deliberation, he gritted his teeth and said, "How about this? You can gather together the souls, but you must do so stealthily after the battle. You cannot allow this to be seen, no matter what. Otherwise, we can't guarantee what will happen afterwards."

The black-robed man's eyes flickered and he nodded. "Alright, so be it. Our sect agrees."

The Moulan spell warriors were still displeased by this arrangement, but they had no choice.

At that moment, the large embroidered-robed man asked, "Are your sect's battle preparations truly feasible? Are you not overreaching yourselves? The Heavenly South also have their own devilish cultivators. Won't they see through you?"

The black-robed man sneered with disdain. "Devilish cultivators? Can they be considered as such? They merely cultivate some superficial techniques. Even if they hold confidence in their devilish techniques, they are merely the same on the surface. How would they know of the viciousness of true Devil Dao techniques from antiquity?"

The short man surnamed Bi smirked and said, "Is that so? But an elder of your esteemed sect was killed in an instant by a Heavenly South cultivator of the same grade. Are you not underestimating them?"

The black-robed man's eyes coldly glinted and he said nothing further apart from a snort. But at that moment, the black-robed woman took the opportunity to say, "I was just thinking of this matter. This cultivator with golden lightning is somewhat useful to our Sifting Yin Sect. I hope that you three Divine Sages would be able to hand him over to us. How about it?"

The shriveled old man wore a puzzled expression. “Hand him over to you?”

“What? Are you three unwilling to agree to a minor request?” As if dissatisfied, the woman’s voice only grew more hoarse.

The shriveled old man stared at the black-robed woman with an odd smile on his face. “If it was only an ordinary early Nascent Soul cultivator, it would be no problem to hand him over to you. But if involves the magic treasure with the Golden Lightning Bamboo, it is a different story.”

The black-robed woman’s mood grew sullen. “Fellow Daoist Zhu has already guessed it.”

The old man replied, “Although our Moulan Plains have been somewhat destitute, I do know a bit about the three divine woods in the cultivation world. While there aren’t many people that know of the Divine Devilbane Lightning, they do not include us.”

Seeing through his intentions, the black-robed man icily said, “Since you know of the Divine Devilbane Lightning, you must know that our Devilish Sects cannot allow this treasure to fall into the hands of others. Speak your conditions.”

The old man’s wrinkly face trembled to form a mysterious smile. “It is quite simple. I heard that in addition to these huge beasts, your sect also refined many Copper-armored Corpses. I hope that in the crux of the battle tomorrow Brother Fang will command them to offer us some help. After all, we don’t know how the cultivators will respond despite all our preparations. We will naturally wish to be more careful.”

After some deliberation, the black-robed man replied. “I didn’t expect for Fellow Daoist Zhu to know so much about our sect’s secret techniques. The Copper-armored Corpses may be easily refined, but it will be troublesome for our sect if we lost too many at once. With these conditions, we will need you to bring back this cultivator alive.”

# Chapter 766: Hidden Plans

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When the shriveled old man heard the sect leader, he gloomily said, “Capture him alive? Is Brother Fan joking? You should know that Fellow Daoist Zhong has already fought him once. Not only is he capable of lightning movement, but also a blood movement technique that hasn’t been seen before. We are incapable of blocking him. With such vast abilities, even we are unable to restrain him. Fellow Daoists, do you believe this is possible. If the request is to kill this person and seize his Golden Lightning Bamboo magic treasure, it will be much more possible.”

“Since it is so difficult to capture him, then it is acceptable to kill him.” To the old man’s surprise, the black-robed man had quickly amended his condition. The shriveled old man exchanged a glance with the other spell warriors and had a quick exchange with them through voice transmission before agreeing to the matter. Afterwards, they began to discuss the specific details of the incoming battle.

...

Master Sunreach, Wei Wuya, and a few others were having a discussion about the war in a large hall. In addition to the three great cultivators and Long Han, there were also a beautiful red-clothed woman and a bald eagle-eyed old man.

The old man’s eyes were narrowed, and he wore a glistening jade ring that was engraved with faint talisman characters. It appeared quite rare.

“Fellow Daoist Heavenvenge, this war will depend on all of us. We will draw the main forces of the spell warrior army here. In the meantime, you and your men will steal into Soaring Heavens City and take everything from the city’s resource depot. Even if the Moulan were able to make some use of it before the battle, if we draw this battle out, they will collapse without support from spirit

stones or any other of their materials.” Master Sunreach smiled at the old man before him, the renowned Eccentric Heavenvenge, as if nothing unpleasant had occurred between the two of them in the past.

“So long as you are able to drag the Moulan Divine Sages to the border, it will naturally be no problem to infiltrate Soaring Heavens City. And with the transportation formation that Fellow Daoist Wei has given me, directly entering the city will prove even easier. However, my sole worry is why the Moulan would leave their resource behind in the city. Is this not a trap that was set behind for us.” The eagle-eyed old man spoke with a voice reminiscent of clacking stones. It was rather uncomfortable to hear.

Devil Concord calmly said, “Fellow Daoist Heavenvenge, please relax. According to our spies amongst the Moulan, although the Moulan Tribes have occupied the States of Feng Yuan and Ye, they have no other supply of resources; before we evacuated from those countries, we destroyed all the spirit stone mines and other material sources. In spite of the great efforts of the Moulan mortals to repair them, they weren’t able to accomplish much in such a short amount of time. As of current, they are consuming a joint reserve of spirit stones that were pooled together from each of their tribes. These spirit stones are all distributed from a secret storehouse that is guarded by a formidable grand restriction. Additionally, there are several sages guarding it for safe measure. With these measures in place, there will be enough time to transport those materials out of the storehouse before it is breached by a potential attack. It is reasonable to say that these resources are as safe as can be.”

Wei Wuya coldly smiled and said, “However, they hadn’t expected that after the many years we spent at war, we were able to place spies in their ranks as they did with ours. One of the sages guarding the safehouse is precisely one of our own. When the time

comes, he will deactivate the grand formation. Fellow Daoist Heavenvenge, so long as you and your people act with discretion, we will catch them entirely unprepared.”

“You Fellow Daoists seem so certain, but I can’t help but ask what I will receive afterwards.”

Long Han answered with a smile, “Once this war is done, our four superpowers will agree to give a section of land in the State of Xu over to you. You may establish your own sect there and we will not interfere in the slightest. From then on, you will be known as a sect founder.”

“Good. Since you seem so confident, my good friends and I will make an attempt. Since it is already late, I will return first to make preparations. We’ll then set off the next day and infiltrate the State of Xu.” Eccentric Heavenvenge appeared satisfied with these conditions, but he had little intention of speaking further with them. He took his leave and soon disappeared from sight.

Devil Concord frowned and slowly said, “That eccentric has good odds of succeeding. He will be bringing those vagrant eccentrics with him as well, each of them possessing profound abilities. If the Moulan aren’t expecting it, there shouldn’t be much reason for them to fail.”

Long Han’s expression stirred and said, “Fellow Daoist Yi speaks truly. So long as we tie down the Moulan Divine Sages, Fellow Daoist Heavenvenge will most likely succeed. However, I didn’t expect that this old eccentric would want to found a sect at his age, not to mention gathering together so many vagrant cultivators to form their own faction. It comes as quite a surprise.”

Master Sunreach leisurely said, “I would say otherwise! Eccentric Heavenvenge has entered mid Nascent Soul stage for at least three hundred years. After being unable to breakthrough to late Nascent Soul stage during this time, I reckon that he has admitted failure. In this case, it is no surprise that he has become committed to

something else. Being able to become the founder of a sect will gain much glory for him. However, he has made many enemies out of various large sects and is taking this opportunity to discuss terms with us. His arrival has come as unexpected reinforcements.”

“Enough. Although we have Eccentric Heavenvenge handling some subterfuge, we cannot be careless at the start of this battle. We must prevail. If we are defeated, we will not we able to stop them, regardless of whatever resources they may possess.” Master Sunreach paused before continuing, “Brother Wei, will your Nine Nations Union have any problems blocking their grand spirit technique formations? This should be the spell warrior’s most common tactic for a melee.”

Wei Wuya calmly said, “In the many years we’ve fought them, we’ve gained an understanding towards spirit technique formations no less than that of their own masters. Were it not for the problem of techniques, our Nine Nations Union would’ve been able to employ spirit technique formations of our own. There is no need for Fellow Daoist Sunreach to worry over the issue.”

Master Sunreach was satisfied by his answer and then he looked at the large black-robed man.

When Devil Concord saw this, he began speaking, “Our Six Devil Dao Sects have already made preparations. Not only do we have the Controlling Spirit Sect’s three sect protecting beasts, our Harmonious Bond Sect has also made preparations to release the Dual Yin Yang Devils from their restrictions. The Ghost Spirit Sect’s Myriad Souls Formation is also ready for us. As for the others sects, they each have made various preparations of their own as well. Fellow Daoist Sunreach, have your Righteous Dao Alliance prepared killing maneuvers as well?”

“Our Righteous Dao Alliance had already started. Each sect has opened the halls of their founding ancestors, acquiring many ancient treasures of great power. They definitely won’t leave Fellow Daoist disappointed.” Master Sunreach spoke curtly, but

Devil Concord nodded with a less tense expression as if already knowing of the existence of these ancient treasures.

Long Han revealed a trace of regret. “Our Heavenly Dao Union is rather lax in this regard. Our various sects have begun preparation, but there isn’t much that I specifically know about. As for our Phoenix Cry Sect, they have taken several ancient jade talismans out of storage. Their might will be quite eye-opening for the Moulan. But given all the time that has passed, their power has waned. After the battle, they will be completely exhausted.”

“Ancient jade talismans? I didn’t think that the Phoenix Cry Sect possessed such treasures. I believe the other Heavenly Dao Alliance sects won’t be disappointing us either. With that address, our sole worries are the black-robed men and the wagered battle.” Master Sunreach pondered for a moment before hesitantly asking, “Brother Yi, those black-robed men used Devil Dao techniques. Are you able to recognize what they were?”

Devil Concord unhappily snorted. “Their techniques may be Devil Dao, but this is the first time I’ve heard techniques of this type. I cannot make an accurate judgement. But there is no doubt that their Devil Dao techniques are far more pure and ingenious than the Six Devil Dao Sects of the Heavenly South. Additionally, they appeared to resemble the Ghost Spirit Sect’s techniques.”

“The Ghost Spirit Sect?” Master Sunreach pondered for a moment before continuing with a solemn expression, “We don’t know how many those black-robed men there are, but during the siege of Soaring Heavens City, eight of them appeared, all at Nascent Soul stage. There are clearly cultivators of the same sect. As for where this devilish sect has come from, could it be the Grand Empire of Jin?”

When the others heard Master Sunreach, they didn’t appear surprised. It seemed they had assumed the same.

At that moment, the red-clothed woman finally spoke, her voice

cold and clear, “Humph! So what if they’re Jin Empire cultivators? From how secretive they’ve been acting, as if afraid of being seen, it is certain that they are only a single devilish sect, or perhaps only a single branch of one. What is there to be afraid of? We merely have to treat them as spell warriors and feign ignorance otherwise.”

Master Sunreach agreed, “Lady Feng words are reasonable. Even if a branch of the Jin Empire’s Devil Dao is fully supporting the Moulan, we won’t be handing over the Heavenly South to them either despite how powerful they may be.”

“That is right. But we must take into account that not only will the Jin Empire devil cultivators have superior magic treasures, but that they will meddle in the wagered battles tomorrow through some hidden scheme. It will be troublesome. The Jin Empire possesses countless secret techniques, many of which are impossible to defend against.”

“It doesn’t matter. I’ve already considered this. Do you remember our Great Truths Sect’s Restriction Breaking Bead?

Long Han astonishedly asked, “The Restriction Breaking Bead? The single-used magic tool that can destroy restrictions? Isn’t it only useful against low grade restrictions? The barrier used during the wagered battles — capable of resisting strikes from a Nascent Soul cultivator — are capable of being dissolved with this magic tool?”

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Master Sunreach explained, “If it were that Restriction Breaking Bead, it definitely wouldn’t have an effect on a high-grade restriction. Brother Long may not know this, but the Restriction Breaking Beads that have spread are only half-finished goods. True Restriction Breaking Beads not only require many precious materials, but they are also difficult to refine. As a result, they possess great efficacy at breaking high-grade restrictions. Of course, since my sect hadn’t used them often, we hadn’t refined many of them. But for those Fellow Daoists that will be fighting in the wagered battles, my sect has managed to gather together ten Restriction Breaking Beads. So long as they have this on hand, they will be able to break the barrier and escape, given that they aren’t immediately dealt with. As such, there is no need to worry about the future.”

Devil Concord glanced at Master Sunreach and added on, “I did wonder why Master Sunreach was so calm about the wagered battles tomorrow. So it turned out he had a trick up his sleeve. With these Restriction Breaking Beads, we will have no need to fear the enemy’s tricks.

But to be safe, our Devil Dao’s Heavenfiend Sect has refined a medicine pill for the occasion, the Death Return Pill. The pill will stimulate one’s true essence, having most of their magic power to instantly replenish and increasing their cultivation slightly as well. However, once the effects ended, their vitality will be diminished. I will be able to give these Fellow Daoists a pill each. If they reach a critical moment of danger, they will be able to take the pill and use it to great effect.”

“That is great. With these two fallbacks, I feel much more relieved about the wagered battles.” Long Han smiled and then he changed the subject.

“These people cultivate Devil Dao techniques. Why not have

some Fellow Daoists from the Righteous Dao deal with them. After all, the Great Truths Sect, as well as several other sects, have many techniques that specialize in restraining devilish arts. They should be quite suitable in dealing with these black-robed men.” Long Han glanced at Master Sunreach and waited for his reply.”

Master Sunreach openly replied, “Of course. These Devil Dao cultivators will be handled by our Righteous Dao Alliance. However, you all will be putting most of the effort into handling the Moulan Sages.”

“This is only natural. The spell warriors will be dealt with the other three superpowers. Specifically by...” The others had been quite happy to see that Master Sunreach has agreed to deal with the devil cultivators of the Jin Empire. They began discussing the matter thoroughly until sunset before feeling at ease. With negotiations coming to an end, each party began to make their own preparations.

At early dawn the next day, the patrolling cultivators caught sight with shining light and heard earth-shaking trembles from the Moulan war camp. Squads among squads of spell warriors calmly flew out from the war camp on their magic tools that they flew towards the center of the sky.

At that moment, the patrolling cultivators hastily sent back word through voice transmission talismans. A short moment later, the Heavenly South war camp began to sound with drawn-out bell rings, sending countless streaks of light to fill the sky from the opposite direction.

For a time, various-colored light filled the skies as clear rings and long whistles continuously sounded out. And with the overbearing advance of the spell warrior army from the other side, it appeared as if two huge waves were about to clash against each other in the sky. But when they reached about five kilometers apart — when they were able to catch sight of one another — both sides came to a sudden stop and began to observe one another from the distance.

Neither army retreated, resolved to fight until the other was wiped out. On one side were natives who lived on this land their entire lives. Their morale was soaring, unwilling to allow the enemies to invade their homelands. However, neither side moved despite the pervasive killing intent filling the air.

At that moment, Han Li was above a division of over a thousand cultivators. He was watching the spell warrior army from the distance. There were bright lights reaching out as far as the eye could see. Each light was a concentration of several hundreds of spell warriors, a continuous glow spanning over five kilometers.

It was clear that both sides have brought out their main forces. Although one couldn't precisely count their numbers, there were at least seventy thousand cultivators present. Additionally, rarely-seen high-grade cultivators were now a common sight.

Although their numbers were vast, the differences between each army were clear to see. While the Moulan spell warriors were all differently dressed, their low-grade cultivators all possessed simple magic tools. They either used bowls and fist-sized beads, or even various colored flags. Blade-type magic tools were extremely sparse in number.

As for the Heavenly South cultivators, their low-grade cultivators possessed a myriad of magic tools, with blade magic tools being in a majority. However, these magic tools were each sparkling with light, possessing astonishing spiritual Qi. It was obvious their magic tools were superior to those of the Moulan.

Although the Heavenly South cultivators were better equipped, the spell warriors were better disciplined. As they flew in the air, they continued to maintain a mysterious formation. They were all silent as they watched their enemies with hostility.

The cultivators, on the other hand, could barely maintain formation and were in complete disarray. It was clear they didn't have enough training. Not only were they whispering incessantly

to one another, but they would occasionally separate from their ranks to do other things. The high-grade cultivators in charge had no choice to rebuke their troops, much to the commanders' frustrations.

When Han Li saw this, he frowned. This came as no surprise. In only a few month's time, how was it possible to properly train so many unruly cultivators.

In comparison, the Moulan Tribes were often at war with the Soaring tribes. As a result, it was a common occurrence for them to be arranged in army formations; they were constantly trained.

This matter was obvious to the higher echelon of cultivators, but there was little they could do. Fortunately for them, this wasn't as crucial a factor for victory unlike in mortal armies. As such, they turned a blind eye to these problems.

As Han Li thought about this, he examined the Moulan army. What was most eye-catching about them weren't the spell warriors, but the dozen of enormous huge beasts that laid amongst their ranks. They appeared almost like small mountains amongst them. Many Nine Nations Union cultivators had personally witnessed the ferocity of these huge beasts, and look at them with a trace of fear as a result.

Han Li raised his head upwards to see clear skies completely clear of black clouds. He then looked down at the chaotically organized cultivators and shook his head with a sigh. He soon flipped his head and glanced at the two items in his palm — a thumb-sized black bead and an almond-sized medicine pill with a pungent and colorful scent.

These two items were sent to him by Master Sunreach on the day before. Han Li was given an explanation of them and it was said that every cultivator participating in the wagered battles were given them. He accepted them with surprise. It seemed in order to win this war, the three great cultivators were sparing no expense,

taking out the treasures that they were keeping hidden.

However, the three great cultivators weren't the only ones taking out their reserves. Han Li couldn't help but glance at an adjacent division of cultivators below. They numbered about a thousand and had sixteen cultivators that wore red and green clothes. They were carrying two huge coffins together, one black and one white, side by side. Several tens of various-colored talismans were covering it.

Han Li easily recognized these cultivators. They were disciples of the Harmonious Bond Sect, the top Devil Dao Sect. This had aroused much of Han Li's interest in these coffins. It was only a pity that the formidable restrictions on the coffin blocked his spiritual sense to looking deeper inside.

Apart from the two coffins, there were also a few other eye-catching objects amongst the rank of cultivators. There was a Righteous Dao sect that was carrying a twenty-meter-tall copper platform with a huge three-meter-wide gong on top. The surface of the gong shined with sparkling golden light and would occasionally reveal white talisman characters floating above it. There was a large bare-chested man that was sitting cross-legged at its side with his eyes closed.

Amongst a division of cultivators farther away, there were many black sculptures that were nearly ten meters tall and were being pulled by a few flying carriages. They appeared to be modeled vicious beasts from antiquity and were carved with vivid, lifelike details. It was unknown what they were used for. Every division of cultivators seemed to have a strange item within it.

When Han Li saw this, he felt more at ease. The various sects knew that this battle was extremely important and they brought out their own sect protecting treasures. As a result, the odds of victory were far greater. And in addition to these treasures, there were also countless other formidable items hidden inside storage pouches.

As for the spell warrior armies, they didn't have anything obvious to see apart from the huge beasts. However, Han Li still felt uneasy. The spell warriors were certain to have hidden schemes, certain to be deadly as they lay hidden. It was truly difficult to say who would win the battle.

At that moment, an unending stream of cultivators and spell warrior armies had finally all gathered together. Then apart from a select few, both armies dropped to the ground, and silence filled the air.

An uproar was raised amongst the spell warrior armies as three people flew out from its ranks, the three Divine Sages: a shriveled old man, a very short man, and a scholarly man. Three streaks of light also emerged from the cultivator's side, revealing Master Sunreach, Wei Wuya, and Devil Concord. They were each stopped tens of kilometers apart.

The scholarly man surnamed Zhong glanced at the cultivators and coldly said, "There is still time for you to come to an agreement. So long as the Heavenly South hands over half of their land over to our Moulan Tribes, we will cease hostilities and become friends. Otherwise, your Heavenly South cultivation world will be certain to suffer a great loss of strength, regardless of the outcome!"

Wei Wuya raised his chin and said, "What a joke. We may suffer a great loss in strength, but if you lose this war, you will face extermination. I should be cautioning you spell warriors instead."

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The shriveled old man spoke bluntly, “It seems there is no point in speaking any further. There is no room for discussion. Now, there can only be a battle of life and death. But before that, let us conduct the wagered battles. Let us send out our people and set up the restrictions. Regardless of the outcome of these wagered battles, we will immediately start the war once they are concluded.” At this stage, he realized that having the three great cultivators admitting defeat was merely wishful thinking.

Devil Concord stared at the old man and coldly smiled. “Of course we will agree to the wagered battles. However, where are the captives you’ve promised? I don’t see anyone. Hehe...”

Once the old man heard this, he blankly stared in through before sending a voice transmission to someone behind him. Suddenly, a spell warrior division began to shuffle, revealing over a thousand unarmed cultivators among their ranks.

The cultivators were then placed in front of the army, each wearing a variety of expressions. There were even those that were flushed with anger and were glaring at the spell warriors. This had aroused an uproar in some of the cultivator ranks; some cultivators recognized a few fellow sect members amongst the captives.

When Master Sunreach and the others saw this, they exchanged a glance and nodded.

The short man of the Moulan Divine Sages grew impatient. “What now? You’ve seen them, so you should feel at ease. Quickly start the wagered battles!”

Wei Wuya suddenly asked, “Why is your esteemed self so anxious? Could it be that you’re planning something with these wagered battles?”

The short man’s face stirred and he menacingly said, “If you

don't dare to fight the wagered battle, we will string these cultivators up on banners and then start the battle. Would you like that?"

A cold glint flickered from Wei Wuya's eyes. He sternly asked, "You're threatening us?"

At that moment, the shriveled old man sinisterly said, "It isn't a threat at all. If you aren't willing to conduct the wagered battles, we no longer have use for these captives, apart from hanging them and stirring up morale."

When Master Sunreach heard this, he frowned and said, "But if we agree to the wagered battle, you will have to release the captives first."

The short man bluntly rebuked, "Release them? You believe that we would do something so foolish?"

"But we are also distrustful of you. What can we do if you don't keep your promise?" Wei Wuya calmly asked.

"Even with this, we..."

Before the short man could finish, an ominous glint flickered from the shriveled old man's eyes, and he interrupted him, "Enough with these useless words. We will first release half of the captives before the wagered battle takes place. We will hand over the remaining captives once they are over. You must have no objections about this, right? If that won't do, then we will simply start the battle."

Master Sunreach spoke to the other two at his side through voice transmission and said with a decisive tone, "Fine, that will do! Release half of the men and we will begin to set up the restrictions on our end." These conditions were the most that the enemy could concede. If the negotiations truly collapsed, he would have no way of rescuing those remaining cultivators.

With the matter decided, the six returned to their respective war

camps and made their arrangements.

Han Li already left his original hiding spot from inside a division of cultivators. He hadn't wished to be noticed by the enemy high-grade cultivators before the battle started. As for conversation between the late Nascent Soul cultivators, Han Li was able to eavesdrop on them with his powerful spiritual sense.

With a faint smile on his face, he saw the spell warriors release half of the restrictions on the captive cultivators. They all flew back towards the Heavenly South cultivators with delight.

Of course, Master Sunreach was already prepared for this. Before the cultivators flew back to the Heavenly South armies, a party of several hundred cultivators flew to meet them halfway. After inspecting the cultivators that were released and confirming that there were no spies among them nor any tricks placed on their bodies, they were released to join the cultivator ranks.

The short man surnamed Bi watched this from a distance and resentfully snorted. "Those Heavenly South fellows are quite careful. Fortunately, we hadn't used those Heartdrain Pills on those cultivators beforehand. Otherwise, it would've been difficult to deal with."

The scholarly man surnamed Zhong said, "Without a doubt! The three great cultivators of the Heavenly South aren't easily dealt with. These small tricks won't work. To kill a serpent, we must strike at its heart. If we try to be clever dealing with these cultivators, we will only end up overreaching ourselves."

When the old man heard this, he didn't reveal the slightest chance in expression. He merely curled his sparsely haired beard and watched the vast army of cultivators across from him.

When Han Li watched from a distance, a group of cultivators and spell warriors flew out from their respective factions towards the center point between each army. They divided into groups of ten and began to lay out spell formations.

These men were all spell warriors and cultivators that were spell formation masters. Although they needed to place some powerful restrictions, there weren't any tricks that could be placed. As these people possessed vast obtainments in the Dao of spell formations, nothing could be hidden from one another.

Ordinarily, placing down restrictions of this rank would consume a large amount of time. But with so many spell formation masters simultaneously working together, making liberal use of precious materials and prepared formation flags and plates, it took only a quarter hour of time to complete ten small spell formations that shined with white light. As soon as the formations were activated, they created ten barriers of white light that each spanned over two hundred and fifty meters.

After these spell formation masters re-examined the restrictions, they saw no problems and each departed. They were then exchanged for ten Core Formation-stage spell warrior and cultivators. They flew over to the barriers, each one guarded by both a single cultivator and spell warrior to prevent any tampering.

One of the Heavenly South cultivators happened to be Cultivator Song from the Drifting Cloud Sect. She appeared to be assigned to watch over the second spell formation barrier. Han Li didn't appear surprised by her appearance in the least.

Since Han Li was going to participate in the wagered battles, it was only suitable that a disciple from his own sect was to guard him. If he were being guarded by the disciple of a hostile sect, they may hesitate to act or even choose to remain still as danger approached.

As a result, Han Li took the initiative to raise this matter with Cultivator Song. She was most familiar Drifting Cloud Sect cultivator to him.

With the spell formations finished, it was time for the fighters to

appear. At that moment, ten black-robed cultivators flew out from the Moulan warriors, each of them brimming with a pervasive devilish aura.

‘Devil cultivators!’ Han Li’s pupils shrank back and he shot into the air towards the spell formations at the center along with nine other Nascent Soul eccentrics; Daoist Shattered Soul, Devil Cloudpart, and the woman surnamed Bai were amongst them, but there were three among them that he didn’t recognize. When they arrived in front of the spell formations, they came to a stop.

When Han Li arrived above the spell formations, he nodded to Cultivator Song down below and calmly faced the black-robed man across from him.

‘How strange! Why is the devilish Qi from their body so frantic? Could it be that they’ve taken an overbearing pill like the Death Return Pill?’ Han Li retained an indifferent appearance as he pondered.

The black-robed man appeared ordinary, but his eyes flickered with cold green light as he stared at Han Li. Although Han Li couldn’t make out his face, it was undoubtedly a cultivator at the peak of early Nascent Soul stage, just a step away from entering mid Nascent Soul stage.

Han Li then turned his attention to the other black-robed devil cultivators. They appeared to be nearly the same as his own opponent and had very few differences between them.

Han Li’s heart stirred with vigilance. There was definitely something wrong with the wagered battle. There wasn’t a single mid Nascent Soul cultivator among their opponents. But this would prove no matter to him. So long as his opponent used Devil Dao techniques, he will be able to use the Divine Devilbane Lightning to instantly exterminate them. None of their tricks would be of any use against him. In the blink of an eye, Han Li resolved himself, and killing intent surged through his heart.

At that moment, the black-robed cultivator took out a storage pouch from his waist and emotionlessly glanced at Han Li. Han Li smiled and took out a storage pouch filled with materials, the wager for the match.

The materials in the storage pouch were something that the four powers of the Heavenly South had gathered together. They were extremely valuable and caused even Han Li to feel covetous.

With a wave of his arm, the black-robed man tossed the storage pouch over to him. Han Li narrowed his eyes and did the same, exchanging their storage pouches.

The black-robed man's storage pouch didn't possess a large variety of materials, but its value was easily greater than his own. From what he learned from ancient records, none of the materials appeared amiss.

Han Li nodded and simply placed the storage pouch at his waist; the black-robed man mirrored him.

When Cultivator Song and the spell warrior saw this, they both began to mutter an incantation and form hand seals. Various spell seals struck the formation and began to activate it.

Han Li and the black-robed cultivator both acted quickly and their bodies blurred, simultaneously appearing in front of the spell formation below. This caused the both of them to glance at each other with slight surprise.

At that moment, a milky-white barrier appeared around them and isolated them from the outside. The other cultivators and the black-robed men had also entered in the light barriers. For a time, there was complete silence amongst both armies. They held their breaths with anxiousness as they stared at the twenty vague silhouettes through the barrier of light.

Having entered the barrier, Han Li didn't pay further attention to any of the others. He simply watched the black-robed cultivator

across from him and remained still. However, blue light began to swirl around him, and flying swords began to tremble as if they were about to launch themselves.

Of course, the most vicious weapon he had against devil cultivators was the fist-sized mass of golden light that was condensed in his Dantian. Han Li saluted his opponent with a chuckle before launching an earth-shattering strike.

# Chapter 769: Battle at the Border (3)

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When the black-robed man saw the light barrier appear around them, he put his hands together in an incantation gesture and began to utter an ancient and obscure incantation. A sinister Devilish Qi erupted from his body and transformed into an inky black tentacle that continuously waved itself around.

Han Li's eyes narrowed as he stared at the black-robed man. However, faint sounds of thunder rang from the cuff of his sleeve along with a flicker of golden light. Han Li had once before killed a devil cultivator of a similar cultivation in an instant. So long as he took advantage of the opening when the devil cultivator attacks, he would be able to deal with him with ease.

But in that next moment, the black-robed man's eyes glowed scarlet, and a beastly, savage roar left his mouth. Soon after, the devilish Qi surrounding his body disappeared. Instead, it expanded, doubling in size in the blink of an eye.

"Yi!" Han Li yelped in surprise. His astonishment wasn't due to his opponent's sudden transformation, but the complete disappearance of his devilish Qi. A strange, unstable aura had replaced it.

The black-robed man's crimson eyes revealed a trace of madness. His inflated body then shrank into the size of a three-foot-tall dwarf before shooting back towards the wall of the barrier in a blur.

In his alarm, Han Li's mind began to churn. He felt a faint sense of dread.

He raised his hand and shot two dense bolts of lightning from his hands, forming a huge net of lightning in the air to capture the black-robed man. Soon after, he shook his sleeve, summoning a small blue shield in front of him. It quickly enlarged and blocked his front. He then slapped his storage pouch with his other hand,

summoning the Restriction Breaking Bead into his grasp.

If matters turned for the worse, he would immediately make use of the bead and break the restriction. Since he knew his opponent was up to no good, he wasn't about to stay still and subject himself to harm.

Just as Han Li's thoughts fluttered about, the black-robed man let out a miserable scream when the net of golden lightning enveloped him. Then with a huge explosion, every inch of his body scattering through the air as a bloody pulp.

Han Li found himself in complete amazement. He originally believed his opponent had performed some ferocious self-detonation technique. However, the entirety of his flesh was scattered all over the light barrier. The explosion itself didn't contain an iota of power.

During Han Li's bewilderment, he discovered something odd. His opponent's flesh remains stuck onto the light barrier, rather than dropping to the ground. As Han Li stared at the flesh, he saw that they began to squirm.

He was dumbstruck by the sight.

With several pops, the flesh remains sputtered into crimson mist and began to spread around the light barrier. In the blink of an eye, it had painted a majority of the light barrier crimson, and a bloody, pungent scent filled the air.

Han Li was aghast, and he hastily threw the Restriction Breaking Bead behind him. With a bang, a black light ruptured as soon as the Restriction Breaking Bead struck the barrier. Soon after, the affected portion of the barrier flashed with light, causing the entire barrier to tremble.

Han Li was overjoyed by the sight and he hastily flicked his fingers, launching successive attacks of azure light at the affected area in an attempt to break it. But during that moment, a crimson

light flashed before him, enveloping the weakened portion of the barrier in mist.

Han Li felt his heart sank and he glanced around, discovering that the entire light barrier had turned crimson and roiled with crimson mist on its surface. Drops of blood seemed to be forming out of nowhere, further condensing the putrid scent of blood in the air.

Without another thought, he opened his mouth and shot a bowl-thick, dense bolt of lightning at the crimson wall in front of him. In a burst of golden light, the crimson mist scattered, but it soon restored itself to its original form, as if it hadn't suffered any damage in the first place.

In his shock, he ceased his plan of releasing his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords and wore a grave expression.

At that same moment, the other nine wagered battles had experienced the same scene. With self-detonation, the barriers turned crimson with blood. The ten Heavenly South cultivators in the wagered battles were all trapped by the light barriers, seized by a technique they couldn't defend against.

The ten Heavenly South Core Formation cultivators that were controlling the spell formation from the outside knew things were far from good. They vigilantly glanced at the spell warriors across from them as they hurriedly formed the hand incantations to halt the spell formation. To their surprise, the spell warriors immediately flew back to their armies without a word once they saw the barriers turn crimson.

The ten Core Formation cultivators weren't relieved in the slightest. Rather, they all knew that matters were grim. It seemed the change in the light barrier was certainly the Moulan's doing.

They managed to dissolve the spell formation barrier as they expected, but strangely enough, a crimson mist had appeared in its place. The mist began to spin and condensed into a thick crimson

layer, forming a complete barrier around it. It appeared as if were made of the blood of several hundred people.

When Master Sunreach and the others saw the blood barrier appear and that the ten cultivators down below were unable to stop it, they managed to keep calm as they suddenly flew down in streaks of dazzling light.

Once Master Sunreach arrived down below, he examined the barrier with astonishment and gloomily said, “Go back! This isn’t something that you’re capable of dealing with.”

When the cultivators heard this, they were greatly relieved and hastily withdrew. Before Cultivator Song left, she glanced at Han Li’s blood barrier with a trace of worry.

On the other side, the shriveled old man and the other spell warriors grew excited upon seeing the Heavenly South Nascent Soul cultivators trapped. They also appeared calm as they watched the three late-Nascent Soul cultivators fly down to the spell formations as if they weren’t afraid of the barrier being broken.

The shriveled old man turned around and smiled at the black-robed man standing behind him. “Sect Master Fang, it is a success! I hope this Bloodcatching Barrier is as formidable as you say and is capable of trapping these ten cultivators for half a day. With ten fewer Nascent Soul cultivators, their strength will be greatly decreased. We’ll be able to strike a decisive blow against the Heavenly South during this time.”

The black-robed man glanced at the shriveled old man and coldly smiled. “Don’t worry. This Bloodcatching Barrier is one of my sect’s six grand techniques. Not only was each blood corpse nurtured for a hundred years, but we particularly had the blood corpses consume a Devilspirit Pill. I also personally controlled the blood corpses with a thread of my spiritual sense in order to conceal their true identity. With such care taken, I was completely confident of its success. Even if those late Nascent Soul cultivators

wished to eliminate the barrier, they wouldn't be able to accomplish it in a short amount of time without consuming a large amount of magic power. Will you be giving them the opportunity to do so?"

As if proving the black-robed man's words, Master Sunreach had arrived before the blood barrier and swiped at it with a blinding cut of sword Qi. With a series of fierce echoes, the blood barrier merely shook for a second before turning to normal.

Master Sunreach wore a gloomy expression upon seeing this. When Wei Wuya and Devil Concord saw this, they didn't bother to attack the barrier. With their experience, they were able to immediately see just how powerful the blood barrier was.

This blood barrier was extremely durable and there were other peculiarities about it. But from that single strike, the three were able to tell that this barrier solely meant to trap and isolate rather than to harm enemies.

The three glanced at each other and wryly smiled. They originally believed that the wagered battles were an opportunity to heavily injure the strength of the Moulan. They hadn't expected that the enemy planned to trap ten of their most powerful from the very beginning. This miscalculation had caught the three eccentrics off guard, causing most of their preparations to be in vain.

Wei Wuya sighed and slowly asked, "Brother Yi, what kind of Devil Dao technique is this? Does your Six Devil Dao Sects have techniques of this nature? Those people self-detonated to employ them. It's unfathomable."

Devil Concord replied with a frown, "We have no such techniques. This is the first time I've seen such a strange secret technique. It seems the cultivators of the Jin Empire cannot be underestimated."

In their annoyance, they didn't have the mind to question their

enemies. Drumbeats were already pounding from the spell warrior armies and divisions of spell warriors began to take to the air. As for the spell warriors that remained on the ground, they began to chant a series of incantations and assumed a position to attack.

The three great cultivators were unshaken by the sight of this. The formations of their own army began to move in response, varied color lights began to shine from it.

Master Sunreach thoughtfully said, “We’ve suffered quite the loss, but it is fortunate that they are only temporarily trapped rather than dead. So long as they can stall, they will have the opportunity to emerge. We originally had more high-grade cultivators to start with. Even if we have ten fewer, we won’t be that much weaker.”

Devil Concord and Wei Wuya knew that these were only self-comforting words. With matters having come to this point, there was nothing they could do despite the fury in their hearts.

“We aren’t needed to direct the battle as it unfolds. We only need to deal with the three Moulan Divine Sages!” An ominous glint flickered from Devil Concord’s eyes as he spoke. He then paid no further notice to the two at his side and raised his head to shout at the spell warrior army, “I’ve long heard of the three Moulan Divine Sages possessing unfathomably profound spirit techniques. Might I ask to experience them and invite you to battle?”

With the use of a secret technique, Devil Concord’s yell caused the air within several kilometers to tremble and leave echoes in its wake. For a time, the incantation being uttered from both armies were interrupted. Even a few of the spell warriors in the air swayed; those with weaker cultivation had also momentarily fallen from the sky.

# Chapter 770: Battle at the Border (4)

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With Devil Concord's challenge ringing through the air, the shriveled old man frowned, but he soon spoke with a tranquil tone, "We will have the fight with the three great Heavenly South cultivators sooner or later. However, I must remain behind to direct the battle and cannot fight. I'll have to trouble Sect Master Fang to occupy one of them. It should prove an easy task given that you've cultivated the Heavenflash Devil Arts to its peak stage and can take in the Heavenfiend Devil's true Qi into your body."

"Since I've already come to an agreement with you, I will be taking action. I also wish to test the abilities to the top Devil Dao cultivator in the Heavenly South." The black-robed man spoke with a cold tone. With green light glowing from his eyes, black Qi began to slowly ascend from his body before he took off in the direction of Devil Concord. As for the scholarly man surnamed Zhong and the short man surnamed Bu, they wordlessly flew after him in streaks of silver and red light.

When the three great Heavenly South cultivators saw this, they hastily pursued them. The six of them then disappeared into the clouds without further trace of them.

Not long after, the color of the nearby sky began to chance in color. It turned from fire-red one moment to pitch-black, another with thunderous explosions echoing across the skies. Flashes of light would occasionally flash and illuminate the clouds.

As six late-Nascent Soul cultivators began to fight, the battle between the cultivator and spell warrior armies on the ground and lower sky unfolded.

However, it was vastly different from a battle between a small number of cultivators, when they would approach and strike one another when they were in range. Instead, both armies chanted various incantations and first activate various defensive

formations around themselves, slowly raising a huge light barrier at the center of two armies, shrouding their main forces.

It was clear to see that the cultivators had finished setting up their defenses first. However, that doesn't mean that the cultivator's elemental Daoist techniques are superior to the spell warrior's spirit techniques. This display of speed was only because a majority of defensive spell formations were made from formation tools.

With the initiative seized, Long Han — the commander of the Heavenly South Army — resolutely gave the order to begin the attack.

The first wave of attacks were to be launched by over ten rare far-range treasures, the huge gong Han Li saw earlier being one of them.

At that moment, the platform supporting the gong was already placed at the very front of the army division. It floated off the ground as if weighing nothing and stopped about a hundred meters in the air with eight large yellow-clothed men standing guard around it. As for the large man that had been sitting at its side, he was now stood at the gong's side with a three meter tall iron hammer in his hand, his eyes still closed.

A short distance away, there were two men that were raising a twenty-meter-tall triangular banner that shined with black light. There was a vivid and lifelike black flood dragon embroidered on top of it.

Farther away, there were nine red-clothed young women that were holding up a tray covered in red cloth that seemed to conceal something underneath. They were arranged in a strange formation as they gently floated in the air.

Among them were three embroidered-robed old men were each carrying a gourd half their height on their backs. They walked at the very front of their troop. These three groups were amongst the

first to hear the order to attack.

The large man standing next to the copper gong suddenly opened his eyes. An aura of yellow light suddenly emitted from his body, and he swung the large hammer at the center of the gong as fiercely as he could. A blinding golden light glared for just a moment before disappearing. In the instant the golden light appeared, it had dissolved into specks of starlight before launching themselves towards the enemy. But just as soon as it flew about forty meters, the golden specks had turned into clouds of golden mist with a series of pops. The large man struck the bronze gong repeatedly, launching barrage after barrage of golden specks from the gong. The golden mist soon turned into a wave as it rushed towards the spell warriors.

The triangular black banner was wildly shaken by the two cultivators underneath it, releasing a black flood dragon out of seemingly nowhere. The flood dragon flew through the air, leaving behind threads of azure and black smoke from its mouth. Then with a fierce gust of wind, a black windstorm formed, blowing rock and sand all around it and preventing nearby cultivators from watching it.

The young red-clothed women simultaneously rested their hands on top of the large tray they were carrying and uttered pleasant incantations. In a flash of red light, nine brilliant red copper plates flew out from the tray and began to twirl around each other in the air.

They were all meter-long fire-red mirrors that shined with spirit light. Countless fist-sized firebirds emerged from them, their bodies and mouths all burning with flame. With a series of clear cries, they shot towards the spell warrior army like arrows.

The three embroidered-robed old men stood in a triangle formation before taking out the giant gourds on their back. As soon as they were opened, a bone-piercing icy white Qi instantly spread to an area in front of it, covering it in a layer of frost. The

frost quickly spread towards the spell warriors.

The strike from these exceptional treasures occurred at nearly the same time the spell warriors managed to raise their own spell formation barrier. Even under the shriveled old man's command, their only option was to endure. In the following instant, the golden mist, the black winds, and the firebirds all struck the spell warrior barrier with their attacks, causing it to tremble.

When Long Han saw this, he immediately ordered for the second wave of attacks before the first wave of attacks was over.

These wave of large-scale attacks were conducted through the use of secret techniques by the joint efforts of each sect. Various colored beams of light and overflowing devilfire shot out from the cultivator army, striking the spell warrior army immediately after the first wave of attacks. These attacks struck true once more, relentlessly damaging the spell warriors' defensive barrier.

The shriveled old man wore a gloomy expression on his face. He completely didn't expect that the spell techniques would activate so slowly and leave the spell warrior army vulnerable. Under such vicious attacks, his spell warriors were suppressed — without the opportunity to withdraw or launch a counterattack. These fearsome large scale attacks were something that even a Nascent Soul cultivator wouldn't dare to receive without the protection of a spell formation. The shriveled old man turned to the black-robed woman at his side. "Madam Lu! It seems we will need you to use your huge beasts, else we won't be able to hold our ground."

The woman smiled and carelessly said, "Since our sect master has lent them to you, feel free to use them. There is no need to tell me personally."

The shriveled old man nodded and immediately gave the order. A series of bellowing roars shook the skies, followed by the appearance of over ten huge silhouettes. They forcefully blocked the various attacks from hitting the spell warriors. These giant

armored beasts immediately rushed in the direction of the cultivator army as soon as they appeared.

With their appearance, the cultivators split off their attacks with some of them attacking the beasts while others relentlessly attacked the spell warrior army. Several high grade spell warriors quickly flew out at that moment , taking advantage of the weakened assault. As they flew, they tossed several tens of various colored beads into the air and began to mutter an incantation.

An inconceivable scene occurred before them. A few of the beads directly bore into the ground and disappeared from sight while a few others resolved in the air while wrapped in azure light. There were also those that produced clear water, pulsed with dazzling light, and emitted raging flames.

Soon after, these beads transformed into the form of demon beasts, such as thirty-meter-long yellow pythons, twenty-meter-tall fire wolves, transparent azure rocs, blue demon tortoises covered in icy mist, and much more.

As soon as these demon beasts appeared, they followed after the huge armored beasts and charged straight towards the cultivator armies.

Because of the innate defenses of the huge beasts along with armor and defensive spells, they were able to continue their charge despite the battered conditions of their bodies.

As for the strange beasts following after them, they were on the brink of destruction. Although they possessed a fearsome aura, most of their bodies scattered after a single attack, turning them into specks of spirit light. With their form dissipated, the beads fell onto the ground, completely void of any spiritual Qi.

The high grade spell warriors didn't seem to mind this in the slightest. They raised their arms once more and tossed out another batch of pellets. With another incantation, the strange beasts came to life and fearlessly charged forward. When this occurred, many

cultivators appeared alarmed and drew more attention towards these beasts, reducing the number of attacks on the spell warrior barrier.

Long Han's expression sank. He hastily thought to give orders, but he hesitated.

With this difficultly acquired opportunity, the shriveled old man gave the order to begin their spell technique assault. In an instant various-colored spirit lights glowed. As incantations were chanted, three-meter-wide fireballs and icicles the size of trees began to form from thin air.

"Spirit technique spell formation!" When Long Han saw this, he muttered to himself. Knowing that he was incapable of suppressing their attack, he hastily sent a voice transmission. Suddenly, the rare treasures ceased their attacks and their owners hastily withdrew back into the ranks of their troops before returning back into the barrier.

At that same moment, over a thousand cultivators flew out from the barrier, each holding a meter tall formation flag. They quickly formed an astonishingly huge spell formation in a quick shuffle. The formation flags were then thrown in the air, forming a layer of rainbow light above the cultivator army, providing an additional barrier against the Moulan attack.

At that moment, several hundreds of huge fireballs and icicles struck down, enveloping their surroundings in waves of fire and mists of ice.

As for the huge beasts and the hollow demon beasts, they were already halfway to the cultivator army. Only the eight strongest of the huge beasts remained, and a majority of the second wave of hollow demon beasts had already been wiped out.

However, the demon beasts were completely fearless in the face of the vast cultivator army and continued their overbearing charge.

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The cultivator's layer of rainbow light was clearly specialized in blocking spirit techniques. Under such heavy attacks, the light barrier wasn't shaken in the slightest. Long Han rejoiced at the sight.

The thousand of cultivators that had activated the formation were elite disciples from the Nine Nations Union. From how skillfully they placed down their spell formation, it appears that Wei Wuya's description of them wasn't exaggerated.

Seeing that the attack had no effect, the shriveled old man's expression grew unsightly, but he immediately ordered another wave of attacks regardless.

The next series of incantations from the spell warrior army didn't form simple fireballs and icicles. Rather, fire crows and translucent ice pythons began to take form in the sky. Of course, due to its increased complexity, the attack took longer to channel.

At that moment, a series of disturbances occurred in the cultivator army, and a division of green-robed cultivators flew out from barrier. They raised spirit beast pouch from their waist and released several tens of different demon beasts in a burst of rainbow light.

The three in the lead appeared particularly uncommon. There was a rarely seen Dragon Horse — with a horn on its head and scales that twinkled with white light on its body, a Two-headed Demon Lion — with a fishy scent and green fur, and the most fearsome of them all, a fifteen-meter-long Venomous Scorpion — with a crimson shell and a pitch-black stinger.

These demon beasts were the most vicious and meticulously nurtured spirit beasts of the Controlling Spirit Sect. Immediately after they were released, they led an overbearing charge against the huge beasts and transformed spirit beasts. For a time, the

beasts fought together in a chaotic battle.

Although only the three main spirit beasts could stand against one of the huge beasts alone, they had numbers on their side. They were well trained; together, they were able to block the huge beasts' advance and even gained the upper hand in battle.

At the same time that the demon beasts were released, several thousands cultivators took to the skies. As they flew, these five cultivators divisions each wielded their various magic tools and rained down attacks upon the spell warrior army.

The current wave of spirit techniques that the spell warriors were casting were far more vicious than the others. As such, the cultivators wouldn't calmly wait for the spell warriors to finish and they continuously sent waves of magic tool attacks and raging waves, wearing down the Moulan defensive spell formation.

The shriveled old man's expression sank and he coldly snorted before giving the order for a large number of spell warriors to fly to the skies and engage the cultivators in battle. A fierce exchange of spirit techniques, magic tools and treasures erupted through the sky. In the confrontation, several hundreds of defensive magic tools ruptured upon receiving enemy attacks and their own fell from the skies, making for a desperate sight.

But in that moment of delay, the spell warrior army had already finished preparations for their next spell technique barrage. Several tens of fire crows and ice pythons charged towards the cultivator armies as if they were alive.

Likewise, in the time the Moulan were casting their spell techniques, the cultivators had also prepared defenses. Before the attacks could land, countless magic treasures and tools flew into the air and struck down a majority of the flame crows and ice pythons. As for those who made it through, they were completely blocked by the rainbow light barrier, causing no lasting damage, only a few sways.

Long Han frowned when he saw this. It seemed the Nine Nations Union's defensive spell formation was incapable of completely blocking more powerful spell techniques. After breathing out a long sigh, he gave the order for the cultivator army to slowly advance towards the spell warriors under the protection of the rainbow barrier.

At that same moment, many cultivators began taking out their magic tools and treasures, using them to protect themselves. Soon, various incantations followed, and the magic tools and treasure began to brightly shine as if being readied for an attack.

The shriveled old man's eyes coldly glinted. He knew that the cultivators risked taking the initiative to approach to interrupt the casting for another spirit technique barrage, and they were successful. With these new developments, he gave the order for the spell warrior army to leave their defensive barrier and slowly march forward.

The distance between both sides quickly drew closer. When the armies were only three hundred meters away from each other, they could faintly see their enemies' faces. Seven white jade talismans took the initiative to leave the ranks of the cultivators, each talisman sent out by seven solemn old men from the Phoenix Cry Sect. Just as the jade talismans were released, they shot towards the ranks of the spell warriors in streaks of white light, and revolved about a hundred meter above them before revealing their true form.

They contracted and swelled before releasing sky-shaking claps of thunder. Each of the seven talismans shattered and turned into balls of dazzling white lightning. As they floated in place, they suddenly grew in size, expanding to miniature suns the size of thirty meters in length in the blink of an eye.

Many of the spell warriors couldn't help but look above, dumbstruck at the sight of them.

‘Not good! It’s an ancient talisman!’ The shriveled old man lost his composure at the sight of this and turned pale with fright. Before he could react, the seven blazing suns exploded in succession.

Scorching arcs of electricity surged instantly above the spell warriors, covering them in seven huge arcs of electricity. The other seemed to have taken this as a sign for actions. Countless flashes of various colored light filled the sky as they tossed their own talismans into the fray. At that moment, a muffled thunder clapped from within the white light.

“It seems quite lively on the outside,” Han Li muttered to himself. At that moment, he was staring at the crimson barrier in front of him with complete tranquility.

Ever since he realized that the Moulan planned to trap them, Han Li’s worries had disappeared without a trace. The Moulan might be completely confident in this barrier, but likewise, Han Li was confident in his ability to dispel restrictions. However, he had to be careful deciding when he would emerge.

Although Han Li might be willing to lend his strength to resist the Moulan invasion, he also didn’t wish to become cannon fodder and die a worthless death in the middle of a chaotic battle. After all, this was a war between armies of cultivators, not a battle against single cultivators.

If he were spotted by several Nascent Soul stage cultivators as soon as he appeared or was met with the simultaneous attack of hundreds of spell warriors, it would prove very dangerous even with his lightning movement. It would only be safer to emerge once the melee starts between both armies, when a majority of high grade cultivators were fighting each other.

Of course, even if the blood barrier hadn’t appeared, Han Li would’ve had other methods of disappearing during the most dangerous parts of the battle. Able to feel the thunderous

vibrations through the barrier, Han Li felt that it was a sign that the melee was about to start. While he didn't know what caused such an astonishing attack, he knew that it was certain to be devastating to the side that received it.

With that thought, Han Li sighed and he shook his head before examining the other areas of the blood barrier.

The blood barrier was truly weird. His spiritual sense wasn't able to penetrate it in the slightest. While it was clear this restriction was a Devil Dao Technique, his Divine Devilbane Lightning had no effect on it, greatly arousing Han Li's interest.

Previously, Han Li had examined various areas of the blood barrier using his Brightsight Spirit Eyes, but he wasn't able to see anything apart from the layer of red. This hadn't flustered Han Li at all, and with the battle occurring on the outside, he still had quite a bit of time to study it.

Han Li opened his mouth and spat out a small azure sword. Wielding it with his spiritual sense, he had it transform into a foot-long streak of light and fiercely strike at the barrier.

With a muffled bang, the barrier remained unshaken, and his flying sword was flung back by three meters.

Unsurprised, Han Li withdrew the flying sword and took out a pitch-black item in his hand. It was the magic treasure, the Thousand Fold Mountain.

He tossed it into the air and formed an incantation gesture with his hands. Black light flashed, revealing a small mountain that was over thirty meters tall.

With a point of his finger, the mountain trembled before fiercely striking at the distant wall. With a loud smash, the black and crimson light intertwined, but the mountain was repelled, resulting in only a few light trembles from the barrier.

A trace of shock appeared on Han Li's face and he held his chin in

hand as he pondered a bit more over the matter. Soon, he pointed to the small mountain once more and had the treasure fly towards the center of the blood barrier. Then with a muttered incantation, the small mountain glowed with black light as it begun to rapidly expand.

A short moment later, it grew over two hundred meters tall and pressed against the top and bottom of the barrier. Without any intention of stopping, Han Li raised his arms and struck the small mountain with several spell seals, causing it to enlarge at even greater speeds. With rumbling swaying, the mountain grew to over three hundred meters tall as its entire body shined with black light. It appeared as if it were a huge pillar firmly propping up the crimson barrier. Soon, the mountain began to cause a slight protrusion from the barrier followed by violent swaying.

Han Li rejoiced at the sight of this and hastily circulate the spiritual power in his body. As he continued to strike various spell seals at the small mountain, it grew ever so slowly as it deformed the blood barrier before it was blocked from further expanding.

Han Li ceased his incantation gestures and stared at the top of the blood barrier with narrowed eyes. It seemed that using the Thousand Fold Mountain to break the restrictions wasn't going to work. He would have to try using the Celestial Ice Flames and the Purple Apex Flames to break it.

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Han Li waved at the huge mountain and it shrunk back to several inches in size in a flash of light before flying back into his sleeve. And in a display of tenacity, the blood barrier shortly returned to its original shape.

He turned around and extended his finger. With a crackle, a walnut-sized ball of faint blue flames appeared on his fingertip. Han Li then shouted, “Go!”, sending the fireball to strike the distant wall.

With a light bang, the blue flames ruptured and formed a blue icy layer that covered the inner layer of the barrier, turning its interior into a world of a severe winter. It had turned so cold that one’s breath would turn to frost as soon as they breathed out.

Sparkling blue covering the inner layer of the blood barrier, Han Li pressed his hand against it in a blur, striking at the dense layer of ice with azure sword Qi. As a result, the ice around his hand shattered into translucent fragments of ice drifting through the air.

Han Li’s expression grew sullen. The area where he struck at the ice was unscathed and still as crimson as blood. The barrier wasn’t truly frozen though, its surface was merely covered in a layer of frost. Blood Qi still roiled at the center of it.

Han Li pondered for a moment before sweeping his hand, covering it in purple devilflames. He pressed it directly against the blood barrier. The difference in strength between the Celestial Ice Flames and the Purple Apex Flames were clear to see. As soon as the purple flames touched the wall, the blood mist protruding from the barrier instantly solidified and began to glow with a brilliant purple light.

With a smile on his face, he carefully controlled the Purple Apex Flames and concentrated their power on a small portion of the

barrier. He then opened his mouth and spat out a bolt of golden lightning, thunder ringing from his mouth.

Golden light flashed as the lightning struck the barrier, leaving behind fine cracks. But soon, the barrier violently shook and instantly mended itself.

Han Li was dumbstruck. The blood barrier greatly resembled Ghost Dao Techniques; it was even capable of restoring itself. It was no wonder why the Moulan was so confident in this restriction, even the Purple Apex Flames was incapable of damaging it. Truly, the restriction was more than capable of trapping Nascent Soul cultivators.

Although he felt somewhat alarmed, Han Li quickly slapped his storage pouch and took out an azure thumb-sized pearl into his hand. This was one of his newly refined lightning beads. Ever since he had refined it, he hadn't had a chance to test it yet.

Having no other way of sensing how the battle was faring on the outside apart from the rolls of thunder, Han Li believed that there should be many obstructions waiting for him as the battle was still in its beginning phase. Additionally, if he were too slow in escaping the barrier, the cultivator army would have already been defeated, leaving him surrounded by the Moulan forces. No matter how exceptional he may be, he wouldn't be able to escape from that.

With that in mind, the lightning bead began to glow as he willed the lightning bead to spin in his hand before shooting towards the blood barrier.

With a muffled roar of thunder, a head-sized ball of gold-azure light struck the ceiling of the barrier, violently shaking the entire dome as a result. A trace of astonishment appeared from Han Li's expression. The might of these lightning beads were far beyond what he had expected.

Just as the thought surface in his mind, his expression made a

sudden chance and azure light brightly shined from his body as he shot through the air. The strike from the lightning bead was able of easily ripping open a small hole in the blood barrier, causing Han Li to fly towards it without another thought.

The hole rapidly shrunk, but Han Li was able to escape just in time. He was overjoyed. The lightning bead created from purple flames and azure lantern flames could easily breakthrough such a durable barrier, much to his surprise. Had the lightning bead not worked, his only other options was to use the Gold Devouring Beetles or the Blood Devil Sword.

Although there was nothing the Gold Devouring Beetles couldn't consume, devouring the barrier would've taken time. As for the Blood Devil Sword, the consequences of its use wasn't something that Han Li could accept lightly.

The Nameless Lightning Bead's ability to deal with the blood barrier came as a pleasant surprise. It seemed the Purple Apex Flames was incapable of breaking the restriction because it was inherently an ice-attribute flame, unlike the lantern flames which were a true fire-attribute flame.

But when Han Li flew out of the barrier, he heard many astonished cries of alarm before he could clearly see what was going on. Followed by that, there were various explosions, rumbles, and furious roars from all around him.

Han Li hastily looked at the scene in astonishment. At that moment, he was surrounded by ten spell warriors. Fortunately, he was able to quickly see that their cultivations wasn't very high.

There were two Core Formation spell warriors with the rest of them being at Foundation Establishment stage. They were all holding onto formation flags and were about to prepare a spirit technique attack. But when Han Li emerged from the blood barrier, he appeared right in front of them.

Han Li ignored them and examined the surroundings instead. He

felt his breath turn cold. The area surrounding him, be it sky or ground, were all densely filled with spiritual light and treasure aura, not to mention a rapid succession of explosions far and near.

The cultivators and spell warriors from both sides were engaged in a melee, with groups of varying numbers engaging one another. At that moment, Han Li wasn't able to see which side was winning, and he turned his gaze to coldly examine the nearby spell warriors.

When these spell warriors saw Han Li emerge from the blood barrier, they were dumbstruck.

"Not good! He's a Nascent Soul cultivator! Call for the great sages!" One of the Core Formation cultivators was the first to recover. After he shouted, he slapped the back of his head and spat a green saber towards Han Li before flying away in a streak of green light. When the others spell warriors heard him, they also recovered from their shock.

The other Core Formation cultivator released a fire-red trident and raised his hand, sending a voice transmission talisman through the sky. As for the Foundation Establishment-stage spell warriors, they all raised the formation flags in their hands and began to utter an incantation. Over ten streaks of light shot out from the tips of the flags and formed a sea of flames burning around Han Li.

"Yi!" Han Li felt greatly surprised that the spell warriors actually took the initiative to tie him down rather than flee. However, a trace of killing intent appeared on his face and azure light twinkled to release several tens of azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Sword from his sleeve. He struck them with a spell seal in a casual wave of his hand and had each of these flying swords lightly tremble before immediately splitting into several copies of themselves, instantly surrounding Han Li in a dense screen of swordlight. The sword QI surrounding him instantly soared with astonishing pressure.

When the two Core Formation cultivators saw this, they were

greatly alarmed, but they ordered their magic treasures to continue the attack regardless.

Han Li coldly smiled and casually flicked two of his fingers, sending several streaks of swordlight to block the incoming saber and trident. In a bright flash of azure light, the two magic treasures were utterly suppressed by the swordlight and endlessly wailed as their spiritual light shrink. As for the sea of flame that roiled around him, the swordlights surrounding his body dispelled the flames whenever they grew near.

Since he didn't have the time to further place with these spell warriors, Han Li had no intention of holding back. With a single command, the hundred streaks of swordlight brightly shined and simultaneously launched towards each of the spell warriors nearby.

Although the Foundation Establishment spell warriors raised the formation flags in attempt to block the attack, they were completely shredded without resistance. When the Core Formation spell warriors saw the swordlight fly towards them, blood drained from their faces. Their possessed neither the courage nor recklessness to receive such a powerful attack, and hastily fled in streaks of light.

When Han Li saw this, a cold glint appeared in his eyes. He formed an incantation gesture with his hands and two swordlights masses of swordlights chased after them. With a series of rings, they bonded together and increased in speed.

Just as the two Moulan spell warriors flew fifty meters away, swordlight had already enveloped them. Despite their greatest efforts to protect themselves and the various techniques they released, the azure light instantly shattered everything that protected them. Without even scream, the swordlight split their bodies into countless pieces, shattering apart even their primal souls.

As Han Li killed them with ease, a violent roar came from up above him. A blinding yellow light soon followed, pouncing towards him at great speed. With a change of expression, Han Li instantly unfolded the Thunderstorm Wings and disappeared in a flash of silver light.

When the silhouette in the yellow light saw this, he couldn't help but slow down and come to a stop, revealing a beardless old man who wore yellow clothes. Although he wore an expression of fury, bewilderment also appeared on his face.

He was a Moulan sage who had been battling against a Heavenly South Nascent Soul cultivator when he suddenly received a voice transmission from a clan member. He immediately disengaged from the fight and quickly flew towards the sender only to see two of his relatives exterminated by azure swordlight. One of them had even been his succeeding disciple, his own nephew.

However, Han Li had quickly disappeared from sight. Alarmed by the sight, he quickly recalled a particularly fearsome Heavenly South cultivator and he restrained his hatred only to sweep his spiritual sense around him.

In the following moment, silver light flashed behind him and Han Li came into existence once more.

“Die!” The old man quickly turned around as soon as he sensed him and raised his hand, releasing a cubic magic treasure towards Han Li. As it flew, it brilliantly glowed in yellow light, instantly turning into a huge brick that was over forty meters large — carrying a fearful momentum as it screamed through the air.

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With an expressionless face, Han Li raised his hand, releasing a blue light from his sleeve. In the blink of an eye, it expanded to become a huge shield and received the strike from the huge brick. Bang! Yellow and blue light intertwined as the brick and the shield remained at a standstill.

When Han Li saw the shield fall back towards him, he calmly pointed at it, and in a flash of blue light, it came to a sudden stopped. Then, the huge brick circled around the shield and smashed towards Han Li.

Han Li coldly smiled and disappeared once more in a flash of silver light. The yellow-robed old man was alarmed by this and raised his hand without another thought, summoning a small purple flag into his hand. It quickly transformed into a purple cloud that surrounded his body.

In that same moment, the old man heard thunder coming from his left. As soon as Han Li appeared, he opened his mouth and spat a small sword towards the purple cloud. An instant later, a layer of deep blue flame emerged from within it.

When the old man saw the blue flames on top of the sword, he lost his composure and wore a faceful of terror. His body instantly blurred three meters away in an attempt to dodge the sword.

But against his complete expectations, a woman suddenly appeared behind him as if she had already anticipated where he would dodge. She raised her hand and released an azure ball that struck at the spell warrior like a bolt of lightning.

The woman appeared without a trace, like a ghost. It was as if Han Li coordinated with this woman to perform a precise and incisive strike.

Even with such skilled execution, the old man was able to see this

coming through his spiritual sense. But at such a short distance, he was unable to dodge; his only choice was to surge the entirety of his magic power into the purple cloud covering his body. He was somewhat confident in the treasure that formed from the transformed purple cloud.

A huge explosion sounded out as golden and azure light brilliant flashed. The purple cloud had crumpled in the exchange and the old man within was in a pathetic shape. Half of his body was gone, and the remaining half was engulfed in azure flames.

Overwhelmed with disbelief and furious alarm, resentment appeared on the old man's face as he gritted his teeth. With a boom, body combusted and a blinding streak of yellow light flew through the skies, revealing an inch-large Nascent Soul with the exact same face as the old man.

Seeing the circumstances were far from good, he decisively anticipated to abandon his body and flew out as a Nascent Soul in a vain attempt to flee.

However, Han Li had already anticipated this. Just as the old man's Nascent Soul attempted to escape, he disappeared in a flash of silver light and blocked the Nascent Soul's escape path. He waved his hand, summoning a golden net from his hand in a clang of thunder. In that same moment, a small sword covered in blue flames shot out from his sleeve as well.

The Nascent Soul wore a face of terror upon the sight of Han Li, and spat out an inch-large bowl in its panic. The sparkling silver bowl charged forward to meet the oncoming golden net, and before they made contact, the old man's Nascent Soul caused it to rupture with a spell seal. In a burst of silver light, countless fragments shot at the lightning net, faintly shaking it upon impact.

In that short moment of delay, the Nascent Soul employed an instantaneous movement technique. In a flash of yellow light, the Nascent Soul disappeared without a trace, only to appear a

hundred meters away. It then disappeared from sight in a brilliant streak of yellow light.

The golden net was a step too late and allowed the prey to escape. Han Li frowned and glanced in the direction the Nascent Soul had escaped, possessing no intention of chasing it.

“Such a wise and decisive character is rarely seen. In order to save his life, he actually destroyed his own personal magic treasure.” A white-clothed woman suddenly appeared, holding the old man’s storage pouch in her hand.

Han Li gloomily snorted. “A mere stroke of luck!” With both the Thunderstorm Wings and the Celestial Ice Flames, the Moulan spell warrior was as good as him. It seemed killing an off-guard high-grade spell warrior was harder than he thought.

Han Li glanced at Silvermoon and said, “Regardless, it seems your movement technique is much more powerful than before. You are even able to conceal yourself a close distance away.”

Silvermoon smiled. “The Four Pupiled Fox is truly adept as concealment techniques. With my recent advancements, I’ll be able to easily attack them, given that Master is occupying their attention.”

“Good!” Han Li indifferently nodded. Although Silvermoon was only his tool spirit, she was also the only other person who knew of the secret of his small bottle. But at an unknown time, he faintly felt a veil of mystery shroud her.

After a few more words with Silvermoon, Han Li turned his head to examine the battlefield. After further examining it, Han Li was able to see through the chaos.

At the greatest heights of the sky, there were six late Nascent Soul cultivators battling. Excluding them, there were three sections of the battle. One was the small-scale skirmishes; cultivators and spell warriors would head out in various sized

groups spanning from several tens to even a thousand, and would fight at each other in close quarters.

These cultivators and spell warriors were very adept at fighting in their groups. As a result, they were much stronger together than alone. Both sides found it difficult to eliminate one another, and they were stuck at a standstill.

Additionally, there were battles where a few individuals fought against a crowd of enemies. These cultivators and spell warriors possessed superior cultivation. These battles were far more dangerous than the group battles; a single mistake could lead to death in both body and soul.

Finally, there were those wielding unfathomable techniques and treasures as they stood in confrontation.

The most eye-catching of them was a large black mist floating in the air, releasing sharp wails. Any spell warrior that was captured by the mist immediately fell from the sky as a corpse. Whenever it appears, the nearby spell warriors would always fearfully keep their distance.

And behind the ghost mist, there would be several fearless spell warriors that continuously struck at the mist with wind and lightning attribute spell techniques and magic treasures. Each strike seemed to scatter a small portion of the mist. However, there were still people continuously waving their flag magic tools within the mist and summoning more mist. This left the Moulan spell warriors without a good plan to deal with it.

In another area, there were a dozen Nascent Soul grade cultivators that were currently engaged in a battle against a three-hundred-meter tall stone giant. It appeared to be made of ordinary stone, but not only was its figure large, but a few small stones would rain down every time it moved its body.

These cultivators didn't dare to receive the giant's attack even under the protection of the spell formations. Additionally, there

were several spell warriors standing on top of its head and shoulders. They were assisting the giant with their own magic treasures.

There were also a few cultivators and spell warriors that were engaged in a battle using magnificent treasures, each possessing power far beyond ordinary ancient treasures. These sect and tribe protecting treasures have greatly opened Han Li's horizons.

Although Han Li emerged from the blood barrier, he remained idle as he observed the nearby fights due to the chaos. He was about a kilometer away from the nearest battles, but even so, two Moulan Sages emerged from the fray and flew towards Han Li with overbearing momentum.

Seeing Han Li ruthlessly dispatch of a similarly ranked spell warrior in an instant, the two had no certainty of victory. However, they couldn't allow this Nascent Soul cultivator to reign free, or the damage he will cause will be far too great.

"Come!" Han Li coldly ordered Silvermoon. He then flew towards a neighboring blood barrier.

When Silvermoon saw this, she wore a strange smile as she chased after him.

An azure streak of light appeared above the blood-red barrier, and was soon struck by a lightning bead. Afterwards, Han Li disappeared once more in front of another blood barrier. Han Li planned free these other Nascent Soul cultivators before planning what to do.

A huge explosion sounded out, along with a streak of scarlet light flying out from the gap in the blood barrier. With a series of laughter, the freed man said, "I, Shattered Soul, cannot thank you enough for your assistance." The scarlet light disappeared to reveal a grey-robed cultivator.

'Daoist Shattered Soul?' Han Li was slightly surprised to see that

this was the first person he rescued.

“Fellow Daoist, block those two for me while I rescue the others.” With a quick thought, Han Li immediately gave him a voice transmission.

“Yi! So it turned out to be Fellow Daoist Han. Your kindness cannot be thanked with words. Please allow me to deal with them!” The grey-robed cultivator revealed shock upon seeing Han Li, but he soon agreed. In a streak of white light, he flew over to face the two Moulan sages.

When Han Li saw this with his spiritual sense, he inwardly smiled and quickly flew over to another blood barrier. With a wave of his hand, another azure light was released.

But at that moment, something unexpected had occurred. The top of the blood barrier flashed with grey light, revealing a large embroidered-robed man. He looked at the incoming lightning bead with a solemn expression.

Han Li was shocked. How was this person able to conceal himself there without even the slightest trace. When Han Li swept his spiritual sense past this person, he couldn’t help but reveal his alarm.

# Chapter 774: Battle at the Border (8)

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With a sweep of his spiritual sense, Han Li found that the large embroidered-robed man actually possessed a late Nascent Soul cultivation; he was a Moulan Divine Sage. Wasn't it said that the Moulan only had three Divine Sages?

Before Han Li could recover from his shock, the large embroidered-robed man had grabbed the air in the direction of the incoming lightning bead.

In Han Li's alarm, he hastily pointed to the lightning bead and had it change direction, but it was too late. A large azure hand suddenly appeared and grabbed onto it with indomitable might, holding it firm in place.

Han Li raised his brow and instantly formed an incantation gesture with his hands, detonating the lightning bead's restrictions. Gold and azure light ruptured from within the large hand, scattering both itself and the hand without a trace.

The large embroidered-robed man coldly snorted, but with a flicker of azure light, his expression returned to normal. Han Li remained in place, staring at him in silence.

The large embroidered-robed man watched him and asked, "Are you Han Li, the cultivator that wields the Golden Lightning Bamboo?"

Rather than answer, Han Li asked, "The Moulan should only have three Divine Sages. Who are you?"

The large embroidered-robed man said in an indifferent tone, "Good! Since you know that I am a Divine Sage and you are able to remain calm, it seems you are the one that Divine Sage Zhong spoke of. My name is Tian Zhong, the fourth Moulan Divine Sage!"

"The fourth Moulan Sage? This is the first time I've ever heard of this. Regardless, that manifested hand of yours seems incapable of

restraining that lightning of bead. It seems you haven't entered late Nascent Soul stage for long, and have yet to consolidate your cultivation!"

Han Li spoke without restraint as he stared at Tian Zhong. In that same moment, he casually pointed to the various swordlights in front of his body, gathering them together to form a sheet of azure light guarding him.

"It's true that I've only entered late Nascent Soul stage for a few years, but do you think you can be a match for me? Your arrogance is quite great." Tian Zhong sneered.

"If he were alone, that'd be the case. But I am also here!" A woman suddenly spoke, and Han Li soon rejoiced.

"Who are you?!" In the spell warrior's surprise, a stern glint appeared in his eyes.

"I didn't expect that after I hadn't seen you for a hundred years, Fellow Daoist Tian would actually enter late Nascent Soul stage. You've greatly surprised me. Let's see whether or not your abilities have grown." Soon after this was said, white light flashed to reveal a red-robed beauty floating in the air. She was coldly staring at Tian Zhong.

When he saw her, his expression stirred. "So it was Lady Feng, but you came here by yourself. Aren't you afraid that something will happen to Long Han? You and your husband have always fought together."

"No worries, my husband is being protected by over a thousand cultivators. Even if you Divine Sages were to personally attack him, you wouldn't be able to touch him. That's why I came over to test the abilities of the fourth Divine Sage. Fellow Daoist Han, go ahead and rescue the others."

Once this was said, she raised her arm and extended her fingers, summoning a bottle of crystalline flames into her palm. Before she

even began to cast her techniques, the bottle was already shining with red light as a raging flame flourished within it.

“The Firespirit Bottle!” Tian Zhong wore a grave expression. As for Han Li, he flew away in a streak of azure light after hearing her.

Tian Zhong’s expression grew solemn and he tossed a spirit beast pouch into the air. In a flash of rainbow light, the pouch released two identical winged beasts. They had an azure eagle’s body and tiger heads.

“Heavenly Tigers!” Han Li was alarmed by the beasts’ appearance and couldn’t help but shout out their name. It was an extremely rare flying beast located in the Moulan Plains. It was capable of both wind and earth attribute magic techniques and was incredibly difficult to deal with. Although the two of them only possessed late Core Formation cultivation, they weren’t to be underestimated.

At that moment, the two Heavenly Tigers roared, unfolding their wings. In a flash of azure light, they disappeared and reappeared near Han Li, glaring at him as if he were their prey.

At that moment, the light surrounding his body disappeared and he came to a sudden stop.

“Instant movement!” Han Li inwardly cursed. He had long heard of demon beasts capable of instantaneous movement, but he didn’t expect it to be true. It won’t be easy to break free of these two beasts.

Tian Zhong didn’t stop with the two demon beasts. In a blur, he created an identical doppelganger of himself and it began to move as if it were true to life. The only difference was that the doppelganger was completely enveloped in a screen of azure light, and his appearance was brimming with dazzling light as if he were a hollow image.

“External incarnation!” Lady Feng shouted in alarm, a strange

expression on her face. It came as no surprise that he was capable of an external incarnation, but she hadn't seen one so strange before.

The azure light doppelganger quickly shot towards Han Li without any obstruction from Lady Feng. At that moment, she was fully occupied with Tian Zhong. After Tian Zhong spat out a sparkling rainbow wheel, he said, "This way, I'll be able to properly test the might of the both of you." With that said, he pointed to the colorful wheel, causing it to fly over to Lady Feng as a rainbow mist.

When she saw this, she solemnly struck the Firespirit Bottle with a spell seal. The bottle trembled for a moment before red light flourished from within, releasing countless threads of raging flame. These flames appeared completely unordinary and moved as if they were alive. One moment, they were scattered, while in another, they were together. But then, the flames roiled, transforming into several huge crimson snakes before rushing to meet the rainbow light mist.

Hearing an explosion nearby, Han Li immediately knew that Tian Zhong and Lady Feng have already begun to fight without having to look, not that he could. He was watching the two Heavenly Tigers that were glaring at him as well as the azure doppelganger. He wouldn't be able to free the other cultivators like this.

With the two famous characters battling behind him, it seemed there would be no further attention spared on this part of the battlefield. Having thought that, he gave several lightning beads to Silvermoon so that she could sneak off to free the other cultivators, but there wasn't any opportunity for that now. He would have to first defeat the three opponents in front of him before he could consider other matters.

With that thought, Han Li reached for his waist and released his own spirit beast pouch, summoning a large swarm of glistening Gold Devouring Beetles. They formed a large revolving cloud

above him.

Han Li clutched a hand incantation and disappeared into the beetle swarm. Then with a loud buzz, azure light flashes several times from within, splitting the golden swarm into three divisions, each of them rushing towards a different enemy.

“Gold Devouring Beetles! If they were fully mature, I might’ve had something to fear.” The azure light doppelganger coldly snorted and spoke with a voice similar to Tian Zhong’s. As for the two Heavenly Tigers, they spread their wings upon seeing the Gold Devouring Beetles and retreated seventy meters away, revealing an expression of fear.

At that moment, the azure doppelganger opened his mouth, releasing three bowl-thick beams of light towards each mass of Gold Devouring Beetles. With each beam, the azure light doppelganger turned a fraction darker. It even appeared a few inches shorter as a result.

The three beams of light extremely quick and accurately struck each of the beetle swarms. With each flash of azure light, a three-meter-wide sphere of azure light appeared, trapping each of the three clouds of beetles.

In his alarm, Han Li pointed to the three swarms, having them each line the walls of the barrier in an attempt to devour them. But a short moment later, Han Li’s expression grew unsightly. The barrier was exceptionally durable, and the Gold Devouring Beetles were slow in breaking it down. Since the three azure light barriers were all made of pure wood-attribute spirit Qi, it could trap the Gold Devouring Beetles for quite a while.

With the combined abilities of the azure doppelganger’s restriction abilities and the Heavenly Tiger’s instantaneous movement, Han Li sensed this battle would be difficult to deal with. Could it be that the fourth Divine Sage was prepared to deal with him? As Han Li pondered about this, he felt a sense of dread.

His guesses weren't far from the truth. When the Moulan's higher echelon had discussed the matter, they had given the task of killing Han Li over to Tian Zhong. As a result, Divine Sage Zhu and the others had given him the Heavenly Tiger along with several other treasures capable of restraining Han Li.

When the battle started, the Moulan hadn't anticipated that Han Li would join the wagered battles. As such, Divine Sage Tian Zhong had tossed the matter to the back of his mind. But when Han Li reappeared, exterminating a group of spell warriors and the body of a sage, Tian Zhong immediately noticed Han Li.

Regardless of whether he was being blocked from rescuing the other trapped cultivators or being killed to fulfill the Yin Sifting Sect's exchange, Han Li had no choice but to fight. But he also didn't expect that Long Han would risk sending his wife Feng Bing to assist Han Li once he noticed that Han Li broke free. If Han Li truly managed to save the trapped cultivators, the war would shift in the Heavenly South's favor.

Seeing that the Gold Devouring Beetles had yet to make any progress in escaping, Han Li was filled with gloom. Before he could do anything else, the two Heavenly Tigers regained their courage upon seeing the Gold Devouring Beetles be restrained. In a series of azure flashes, the two spirit beasts disappeared from sight.

Han Li coldly smiled in response and flung his sleeve, summoning a blue shield in front of him. At that same moment, he pointed to the swarm of swords in front of him. They surged with sword Qi and began to revolve around Han Li, forming an impenetrable barrier.

Soon, azure light flashed next to Han Li, revealing the two Heavenly Tigers. They opened their mouths and each spat out a blinding orb of light. Han Li wore a stern expression upon seeing the attack and had his swordlights part into two to meet the incoming orbs of light. Two muffled explosions sounded out as the swordlights easily shattered the orbs of light. Afterwards, they

swept their way to the two spirit beasts. When the Heavenly Tigers saw this, cunning shined from their eyes before they teleported a distance away.

In his fury, Han Li was about to command the swordlight to pursue them, but the azure doppelganger suddenly attacked.

Just as Han Li's battle with the doppelganger continued, both Long Han and the shriveled old spell warrior gave the command for their armies to unleash their killing maneuvers. Seven white-haired Nascent Soul cultivators flew out from behind Long Han with a calm expression, each of them wielding an ancient treasure. As for the spell warriors, a troop of Nascent Soul spell warriors flew out, the woman surnamed Le amongst their ranks. Under the shriveled old spell warrior's signal, she carefully took out a bronze lantern from her storage pouch and held it in her hand.

# Chapter 775: The Seven Great Truths Cultivators vs the Sacred Bird

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The woman surnamed Le sent the ancient lantern into the sky and released a trace of white Nascent flame from her mouth, lighting the ancient lantern. With both hands forming an incantation gesture in the shape of a lotus flower, she muttered a cryptic incantation, summoning a white lotus beneath her as it slowly blossomed. It was done with such grace that she appeared otherworldly.

Her incantation was filled with an indescribably ancient aura. Then with a tremble from the bronze lantern, mirages suddenly emerged from the lamp, forming eight identical copies of itself. They then began to revolve around themselves before separating into three different circles that slowly circled around each other.

The woman surnamed Le flicked her finger striking each of the ancient lanterns with various spell seals. Azure light brightly shined, causing nine flames to simultaneously float from the lanterns, and met at the center of them, turning into a head-sized azure flame. The woman then spat out a mist of blood essence at the azure flames. The flames engulfed it, burning all the more brightly and vastly increasing in energy.

A short moment later, a clear cry echoed and a foot-long azure bird emerged from the flames. The magnificent peacock appeared graceful with long azure feathers and a pair of jewel-like, fire-red eyes. It arrogantly glanced around and tilted its neck when it saw the woman surnamed Le beneath it. It began to spoke to her in an ancient language from the time of antiquity.

After deeply saluting at the bird three times, she replied to it through voice transmission. The shriveled old man watched this with a grave expression.

Spell warrior Le stopped talking in an ancient language and she

flipped her hand, taking out a pink, fragrant pearl. When the azure peacock saw this, he revealed an expression of joy and sucked it into its mouth in an azure mist.

With a crackle, a halo of light glowed azure peacock and azure flames roiled around it. As a sharp cry scream through the air, it transformed into a huge bird of flames and unfolded its wings, engulfing five kilometers of the sky in fire-attribute spiritual Qi. The cultivators and spell warriors who used fire-attribute techniques suddenly felt their power weaken, much to their alarm.

The fire spirit Qi in the air began to gather together like rivers to an ocean and poured into the azure bird's body. As a result, it began to expand, causing the azure flames on its body to grow all the brighter.

All the cultivators within five kilometers stilled their hand and looked at the azure firebird with shock. The nearby temperatures had instantly risen. Even under the protection of magic tools, they felt as if they were beside a furnace.

But when the spell warriors saw this, they revealed an expression of joy.

“It’s the Sacred Bird! Sage Le has summoned it!”

“This battle is ours!” A few spell warriors shouted out with loud voices. Soon, they began to launch frantic attacks at the cultivators with great excitement.

The shriveled old man wore a rare smile upon seeing the might of the Sacred Bird. When the black-robed woman from the Yin Sifting Sect saw the azure peacock, a strange expression flickered from her face. She then said, “Only a Sacred Bird at Deity Transformation stage is able to control the fire spirits of heaven and earth. It is no wonder it is your most valued weapon.

However, your Sacred Bird may be powerful, but when it emerged it was only at early Nascent Soul stage. And it was only

able to barely ascend to late Nascent Soul stage after absorbing all that fire spirit Qi. That should be a doppelganger of sorts. Else, the Moulan definitely wouldn't have lost so much land against the Soaring Tribes."

After glancing at the black-robed woman, the shriveled old man calmly replied, "Lady Lu is no ordinary character I see! The Sacred Bird's true body isn't present, but that is only a small matter. Even late Nascent Soul cultivators are no match against it."

The black-robed woman nodded. "That's right. Being able to absorb so much worldly spiritual power is something only Deity Transformation stage beings can do. But just this ability alone already puts it in an invincible position." The shriveled old man chuckled and didn't reply.

As for the seven white-clothed old men, just as they used their various ancient treasures to strike the spell warriors, they spotted the huge bird within an azure sun and were dumbstruck.

The grey-robed old man in charge wore a grim expression and said, "Not good! That demon beast isn't something that ordinary cultivators can withstand. We must block it."

Another old man responded with a lively tone, "Then what are we waiting for him. Let's use the Seven Treasures of Great Truths to kill them. That demon bird isn't something from this world. We cannot allow it to cast any spells." Soon after, he transformed into a streak of yellow light and flew straight towards the azure sun.

When the others saw him, they immediately followed his lead. As for their leader, the grey-robed old man, he appeared hesitant but followed after them as well after a sigh.

When the seven cultivators approached the azure sun, the Moulan Sacred Beast had already finished absorbing the fire spirit Qi nearby and its body grew to over eighty meters tall. It glanced down at the several cultivators with an entirely hostile expression. With a malicious glint in its eyes, it unfurled its wings and

launched a barrage of fist-sized azure fireballs towards the seven.

Before the seven old men could begin their attack, they felt a wave of warm wind. Their bodies were immediately dry, but they felt their hearts tremble. Under the vast barrage azure fireballs, the old man with long eyebrows slapped his storage pouch and flung a crystalline ice net towards the fireballs. In a flash of white light, all of the fireballs had been captured by it.

When the long-eyebrowed old man saw this, he smiled, but soon his complexion paled. The ice net ruptured only after a moment, thoroughly dissolved by the azure flames that it held. In that time, the fireballs transformed into a pillar of flame and shot to the men with overbearing momentum.

“Go!” The old man in the lead swiftly released his own magic treasures, a milky-white ancient mirror. It flew out and circled once before releasing a white barrier that staved back the azure flames.

But when the others saw the ice net dissolve, they felt their breaths turn cold. They knew that common magic tools wouldn’t prove useful against an azure flame.

“Quickly use the Devil Isolating Formation. Seal that demon bird!” The leading old man shouted. When the other cultivators heard this they hastily commanded their ancient treasures.

A red club, yellow halberd, medallion, small cauldron, jade fan, and a scepter soared into the sky, surrounding the huge bird. Then after a series of clear rings, the ancient mirror transformed into a rainbow, raising a rainbow barrier that not only withstood the azure flames but also trapped the huge bird.

When the azure bird saw this, its eyes were filled with fury. It pecked downward, its beak surrounded by a dense layer of azure radiance. An instant later, a tall old man suddenly felt his medallion treasure tremble. With a huge bang, it was struck back and flew straight towards him.

In his alarm, he hurriedly struck his medallion with several spell seals in an attempt to stop its momentum, but the medallion only paused for just a moment before ruthlessly continuing onward towards the old man. But just as it was about to strike him, a silhouette suddenly blurred behind him and placed his hands on his shoulders, pouring in a huge amount of spiritual Qi into his body.

“Quickly cast the technique. I’ll lend you my strength.” The leading old man spoke with a cold voice, rousing the tall old man’s spirits. In a single breath, the tall old man cast five spell seals and stopped the medallion from coming any closer. The two couldn’t help but sigh with relief, having regained control of it.

As this occurred, dread filled the hearts of the other old men. They became more vigilant and hurriedly exerted the utmost power of their ancient treasures. Various colored light intertwined and combined together to block the strikes from the huge bird’s light-clad beak.

Not far away, Spell Warrior Le glanced at the scene and turned her head around to look at the ancient lantern. After a moment of hesitation, she remained still. Until the lantern oil fully burned, she needed to guard it and couldn’t eliminate the cultivators attacking the Sacred Bird. Leaving the lantern alone would prove disastrous.

The shriveled old spell warrior revealed surprise when he saw the old cultivators tying down the Sacred Bird, but he didn’t seem to pay it any mind.

He wasn’t worried about the bird deity that they had worshipped with tens of thousands of years. It clearly had the advantage. Regardless of how powerful those seven magic treasures may be, they aren’t any match for the Sacred Bird. It would definitely be able to strike down the seven cultivators before the lantern oil was finished burning.

These seven should be the ultimate killers of the Heavenly South. With that thought, the shriveled old spell warrior turned his eyes to glance at Long Han, who was standing in front of an army of over a thousand cultivators with a sullen expression.

“I didn’t expect for the Moulan of being capable of summoning such a powerful demon bird. This will be troublesome.” Long Han muttered to himself with a sullen expression. Then with a loud voice, he coldly said, “Quickly, release the Spirit Phantoms. Take advantage of moments the Seven Great Truths Cultivators are giving us and use them to great effect.”

Soon after he gave the order, several tens of birds shining with pitch-black light flew out from the cultivator army. Additionally, there were several cultivators who took out a spirit talisman from their storage pouch and slapped it on a statue. In a flash of green light, the spirit talisman merged into the statue and the cultivators immediately sat on the ground, motionless.

A short moment later, the eyes of the pitch-black phantom birds shined with a chilling blue light, and they extended their claws as much as they could before flying down to the spell warriors below. As for the cultivators who slapped the talismans on the statue, their heads began to roll as if they fell asleep.

When the shriveled old man saw this, a trace of mockery appeared on his face. He turned around to the black-robed woman and politely said, “The time has come for your esteemed self to give them the lethal blow. Lady Lu, release your Copper-armored Corpses. We can seize victory now.” Satisfaction appeared on the shriveled old man’s face.

The black-robed woman’s eyes twinkled for a moment before she calmly said, “Brother Zhu, don’t be hastily. Let’s wait a moment more. A majority of my sect’s Copper-armored Corpses possess Foundation Establishment cultivation. So long as we wait until the Heavenly South cultivators exhausted their strength, the corpses will be able to rout them.”

After frowning a moment, he hesitated before nodding. “This... Fine! So long as you don’t change your mind, we can wait a little bit more.” He felt her words felt a bit of reason.

# Chapter 776: Might of the Spirit Subjugation Talisman

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At that moment, Han Li felt particularly gloomy. Half of it was due to the two Heavenly Tiger's cunning. They stuck to him like tar but they didn't dare to face him on a one on one battle. They merely harassed him at close range.

Not long after, he deliberately left an opening and managed to bait one of the beasts into attacking him. As a result of fierce retaliation, Han Li cleaved one of the demon beast's claws in half, but from then on, the two demon beasts switched to continue attacking him from a distance using light orbs, rather than staying close to him. But every time that Han Li attempted to shake them off with his Thunderstorm Wings, the demon beasts immediately chased after him and bothered him without end.

As for the other reason for his gloominess, it was the azure light doppelganger. It seemed to be formed out of pure wood spirit Qi and couldn't be harmed by the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords. Regardless of how much sword Qi struck his body, it would scatter and become one with him.

This was the first time Han Li had encountered such a situation; it proved rather eye-opening.

When Han Li saw this, he used the Celestial Ice Flames to attack, but he didn't expect that the azure doppelganger would spit out a blue bowl that was capable of absorbing the flames. This had caused a cold tremble down Han Li's back.

Fortunately, as he had already refined the Celestial Ice Flames to be one with his body, he was able to will the flames to struggle free from the bowl and return back into his body. Since the amount of ice flames refined in his body wasn't much, even the loss of a slight sliver was significant.

As a result, Han Li didn't dare to use the Purple Apex Flames. As for the Thousand Fold Mountain and his other treasures, Han Li used them to little effect before putting them away.

Although the azure doppelganger wasn't unkillable — as each wound would cause its light to dim and its figure to grow shorter — it wasn't an enemy that he could deal with in a short amount of time. Fortunately, it didn't have any particularly vicious attacks and magic treasures; it was only capable of attacking him with threads of azure Qi, something that Han Li could easily deal with. It seemed that this doppelganger only wished to tie him down.

As for the red-clothed woman, Feng Bing, despite being at the peak of mid-Nascent Soul stage, her strength was still vastly lacking as she fought against the late Nascent Soul-stage spell warrior. She used her techniques and abilities to their greatest extent, but she still found herself at a disadvantage.

The fourth Divine Sage would occasionally glance over at Han Li, causing him to feel greatly uneasy as if there were needles bearing into his back.

At that moment, the Seven Great Truths Cultivators were only barely able to withstand the attacks of the Moulan's sacred bird. Han Li's heart sank at the sight. As of current, their only hope of victory would be freeing the cultivators trapped by the blood barrier. Otherwise, they would have no chance of recovering their momentum and they would be forced to retreat in a massive defeat.

After a moment of thought, Han Li resolved himself, unwilling to allow the standstill to continue. He immediately released several swordstreaks in order to repel the Heavenly Tigers for a moment. He then slapped his storage pouch and took out a wooden box with talismans sealed all over it. When the doppelganger saw this, he yelped in surprise and promptly attacked Han Li in a barrage of wood spirit threads.

Han Li's figure blurred. With a quick command, his body glowed with swordlight and cut down the attacking threads. Azure light then flashed from the wooden box and the talismans seals were released. A streak of crimson light flew out from the box and revolved once in Han Li's palm. It was the Spirit Subjugation Talisman.

Han Li slapped the crimson talisman on his body without the slightest hesitation and it disappeared in a flash of crimson light.

Azure light glowed from Han Li's face as he took a deep breath, summoning a huge flood dragon phantom in front of him. It was over thirty meters large and had a body of crimson, appearing exactly the same as the grade eight Venomous Flood Dragon.

The flood dragon coiled above Han Li before releasing a sky-shaking roar, shaking the hearts of all the cultivators nearby, momentarily putting a stop to the fighting from the shock. When Tian Zhong saw this, he frowned and a solemn expression appeared on his face. As for Feng Bing, her eyes twinkled as if looking forward to its performance.

With the roar finished, the flood dragon charge towards the sky in a spiral and its figure quickly shrank before burrowing itself into Han Li's body without a trace. At that moment, Han Li felt a wave of scorching heat in his body as the small image of a flood dragon was burned into his back, glowing with crimson light.

At that moment, crimson light pulsed from Han Li's body as fingernail-sized crimson scales began to emerge one by one, glistening with light. Then with a sharp pain from his head, an exquisite, bright flood dragon horn emerged with ten sharp points.

"This..." When Han Li felt the astonishing spiritual Qi emitting from his body, he found himself in awe.

Although the Spirit Subjugation Talisman had mentioned its effects slightly — that was capable of refining a demon soul's cultivation and taking it into one's body to vastly increase their

cultivation — it had never mentioned that the user would have their body become semi-demonic.

Of course, this kind of demon transformation was quite weaker than a spiritfuse technique. At the very least, he didn't grow a fang and a flood dragon tail. Rather, it strongly resembled [Man Huzi](#)'s Heavenbearing Devil Arts. Han Li sighed and gently stroked his horn without speaking a word.

Of course, Han Li couldn't have known that the founder of this talisman had created the talisman to make up for the flaws of the Spiritfuse Technique. Not only was the user now able to retain his original consciousness, but they wouldn't overdraft their vitality and caused harm to their lifespan. The sole flaw was that it was incredibly difficult to refine.

In this world, most cultivators wouldn't even have the opportunity to spot a grade eight demon beast, let alone acquire grade eight demon souls. Additionally, the manifested demon soul would have to be refined, else it would bring about harm.

Although low-grade demon souls could also be refined into a Spirit Subjugating Talisman, the demonic Qi of their souls would be too impure. Once it was turned into a talisman it would display the same effects as the Spiritfuse Technique, so it was particularly stressed that only demon souls at grade eight and higher could be used to refine a Spirit Subjugation Talisman.

Although Han Li was somewhat surprised, he felt his cultivation suddenly rise to the peak of early Nascent Soul stage. The talisman's effects were truly effective. Additionally, the two Heavenly Tigers felt rather uneasy from the flood dragon aura that Han Li's body emitted. But after the azure doppelganger shouted at them, the two Heavenly Tigers regained their calm.

Han Li coldly smiled and he unfolded the Thunderstorm Wings, reappearing thirty meters away in a ring of thunder. When the two Heavenly Tigers saw this, they hastily chased after him in a flash

of azure light. Soon after, they closely chased after Han Li and spat out several balls of light at him in succession.

A cold glint flickered from his eyes and thunder rang from his wings once more. He suddenly disappeared for a moment before reappearing behind the demon beast.

At that moment, the other demon beast spouted out a barrage of balls of light. It intended on forcing Han Li to block the attack and give its companion the opportunity to escape.

But with his increased cultivation, Han Li no longer felt the need to control the swordlight. With crimson-azure light shining from his body, he took the risk to have his body's spiritual Qi block the attacks. Then in a blur, he extended his arm, swiping it in an azure streak with otherworldly speed and momentum.

In the Heavenly Tiger's shock, it wasn't able to use instantaneous movement. It was only able to spit out its azure-yellow demon core in an attempt to block the attack. When the azure doppelganger saw this, he flew forward with alarm and spread out his arms, releasing a dense barrage of azure threads towards Han Li.

In a series of huge rumbles, the balls of light exploded upon impact with Han Li's body, but it merely caused his body to sway. He didn't suffer any damage in the slightest. Rather, his full powered sword wing not only cleaved the demon core into two but also the Heavenly Tiger as well. Without instantaneous movement, the beast was no match for Han Li.

In that moment, the azure doppelganger's attack had wrapped around Han Li, but crimson light flashed from his body, turning the azure threads black and causing them to fade away.

“The flood dragon poison!” Han Li was delighted. He had only blocked the azure threads with his body's spirit light and was able to easily dissolve them; he hadn't used any techniques. The azure doppelganger revealed fear at the sight.

A mournful howl roared through the air. When the remaining Heavenly Tiger saw that its companion was slain, it was filled with violent fury. In a flash of azure light, it directly teleported to Han Li's side and swung its foot-long, light-clad claws as if it had lost itself to rage.

Han Li remained expressionless and raised his scale-covered claw. Crimson light flourished all around it and directly met the Heavenly Tiger's claw.

Bang! Han Li's claw was able to easily strike away the Heavenly Tiger's swipe, and in a blur, he was able to easily pierce into the Heavenly Tiger's body with his other arm. He took out an azure-yellow demon core in his claw and the Heavenly Tiger's corpse fell to the ground.

With the increased cultivation from the Spirit Subjugation Talisman, Han Li was able to kill the two beasts in succession in mere seconds. This display of might had caused the azure doppelganger to hesitate and release Han Li from further pursuit. Then in another blur, Han Li faced the azure doppelganger and coldly examined it.

As this occurred, Tian Zhong had clearly seen this, arousing furious alarm in his heart. He commanded his rainbow wheel to furiously attack the beautiful woman before he disappeared, abandoning the fight and flying straight towards Han Li instead. But just as this occurred, a muffled explosion sounded out and a nearby crimson barrier suddenly ruptured, a glacial mist madly rushing out from the opening. A silver streak flew out amidst it and spiraled once around in the air before stopping near Han Li.

Man Huzi was a renown Devil Dao cultivators in the Scattered Star Seas. Last seen in Heavenvoid Hall.

# Chapter 777: Yin Yang Corpse Devil

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The light faded away to reveal a beautiful white-clothed woman. She was the woman surnamed Bai who seemed to have a past with Master Sunreach. As she expressionlessly glanced around in the air, she saw Han Li and Feng Bing, causing her expression to stir.

The sudden appearance of this woman caused Tian Zhong to unconsciously paused in the air and his expression to waver.

When Feng Bing saw Cultivator Bai break out from the blood barrier, she shouted with roused spirits, “Fellow Daoist Bai! You’ve come at a great time. This is the fourth Moulan Divine Sage. Quickly help me tie him down so Fellow Daoist Han can free the others.”

The woman surnamed Bai icily glanced at Tian Zhong and she maliciously said, “The fourth Divine Sage? So you had a hand in this trick as well.”

“I didn’t think that apart from that youngster, that there would be someone else able to break through the blood barrier as well. It seems those from the Yin Sifting Sect are unreliable.” Tian Zhong didn’t respond to Cultivator Bai’s question and instead muttered to himself instead.

“You’re courting death!” Seeing that she was ignored, Cultivator Bai’s complexion grew ashen with fury. She formed an incantation seal with her hands and gathered together a vast, shining white mist, launching it towards the Divine Sage with astonishing momentum. When Feng Bing saw this, she pointed to the Fire Spirit Bottle and launched an attack from the other side.

Han Li no longer hesitated and spread his wings once more, reappearing near another blood barrier. Although he felt certain that he could kill the azure doppelganger given the power of the Spirit Subjugation Talisman, it was more important to free the cultivators for the sake of the war.

With the blood barrier before him, Han Li summoned a lightning bead into his hand with a wave of his hand.

“Be careful, Master!” Just as Han Li was about to throw out the lightning bead, he suddenly heard Silvermoon from the back of his mind.

Han Li’s heart trembled, and he instantly tossed out the lightning bead, striking down at the blood barrier in a fierce streak of azure light. But in that same moment, a head-sized ball of azure flames had moved to intercept him. With an expression of shock, he saw the ball of flames swiftly strike at the lightning bead.

With a pop, the lightning bead was silently engulfed by the flames and with a series of shifting flames, it turned into a foot-long azure firebird that floated in the air.

Han Li wore a stern expression at the sight and he formed a hand incantation, detonating the lightning bead within the firebird’s body. However, the bird’s body merely swayed from the explosion and suffered no true damage; it merely stared at Han Li with a slightly swollen body.

When Han Li saw this, he was greatly alarmed and looked up to see a series of azure fireballs approaching him from the direction of the Moulan Sacred Bird. When they drew near the crimson barriers, they transformed into azure firebirds in the blink of an eye and they each began to surround the blood barriers.

At that moment, Han Li realized the firebirds were most likely related to the Sacred Bird. It is no wonder why the lightning beads had strengthened them as they were formed from the lantern flames to begin with.

Not far from the Sacred Bird, Spell Warrior Le was coldly staring at Han Li. The two’s gazes met. Now realizing that the sacred bird had to do with her, he grew furious.

However, when Han Li saw the nine ancient lanterns floating at

her side, Han Li couldn't help but narrow his eyes, pondering as he calmly gazed at the blazing flames. As for the azure firebirds, they didn't have any intention of attacking him. They merely circled around the blood barriers.

At that moment, Silvermoon appeared at Han Li's side in a flash of white light. With an apologetic tone, Silvermoon said, "Master, please forgive me for being of no use during your previous battle. Those Heavenly Tigers were far too intelligent. I would've been found out if I drew too close of them."

"Enough. You've done all you could." Han Li shook his head and calmly said, "Nevertheless, you should take these two lightning beads. See whether or not you can sneak past them and rescue the cultivators inside. Use the two of them and see if you can free even one."

Silvermoon received the two lightning beads and respectfully said, "This servant will do her utmost." She then concealed herself in a flash of white light.

Han Li then turned around and glanced in the direction of Tian Zhong. Scarlet flames and icy white mist were intertwined as rainbow light occasionally flashed from within. At the moment, it was difficult to say who held the advantage. As for the azure doppelganger, it had disappeared at an unknown time, unknown as to whether it was fighting within him or if Tian Zhong had withdrawn it, relieved at the fact the Sacred Bird had personally assisted him.

Han Li shook his head and then glanced at the tensome azure firebirds with a fierce intensity. Crimson-azure light shining from his body, he raised both of his hands and summoned the blue light shield. Afterwards, he formed a hand incantation and enlarged the shield, blocking his front as he summoned another lightning bead with the flip of his hand.

Then with claps of thunder from behind him, Han Li blurred and

reappeared forty meters in the air. Having yet to throw the lightning bead in his hand, the firebirds all around him shot towards him. In the blink of an eye, a shroud of azure flame appeared in the air, submerging Han Li within it.

At that moment, Long Han's gaze moved away from Han Li. He had originally hoped that Han Li would be enough to free the trapped cultivators and regain momentum over the battle. But when he saw the Sacred Bird release several firebirds towards Han Li, he grew sullen and knew that their chances weren't good.

He then turned his gaze to the spell warriors in the distance and he saw that although the Seven Great Truths Cultivators managed to hold down the azure demonfire from the Moulan's Sacred Bird, they clearly wouldn't last much longer. Although it only possessed late Nascent Soul cultivation, it had the abilities from Deity Transformation stage.

"Release the Yin Yang Devils. Tell them to not busy themselves with killing and have them deal with the ancient flames instead." With a sullen voice, Long Han released the last card he had hidden up his sleeve.

"Yes!" A Harmonious Bond Sect cultivator who had been waiting at his side immediately flew off to deliver the message.

After an uproar, two eerie coffins, one black and one white, were summoned forth. Sixteen male and female disciples from the Harmonious Bond Sect all sat down around the two coffins and began to cast incantations and spell seals, striking at the coffins with various spell seal and beginning the process of releasing the coffin seals.

As the incantation continued, the talismans on top of the black-white coffin began to tremble and the coffin thumped as if limbs were knocking against the wood from within. When Long Han heard this, he couldn't help but raise his brow. He had heard quite a bit about the Harmonious Bond Sect's Yin Yang devils.

It is said that these two corpse devils were once a pair of Dao companion elders from a previous generation. They both possessed early Nascent Soul stage cultivation but they had betrayed the Harmonious Bond Sect for some reason or another and turned to the path of the Ghost Dao, transforming themselves into living corpses.

Later when the two made great sweeps in their cultivation, they wished to exterminate the Harmonious Bond Sect, killing over a hundred disciples before they were finally captured alive by several sect elders. By taking advantage of an ancient technique to erase their consciousness, they were refined into the legendary Yin Yang Corpse Devils. It is said that the Corpse Devils were immensely powerful, even more powerful than when they were once alive.

As these thoughts appeared in Long Han's mind, the sounds from the coffins grew louder and louder with the talismans growing fewer with each spell seal that strikes it. As for the thirty-two Harmonious Bond Sect disciples that surrounding the coffins, their faces grew more uneasy as their incantations continued, their gazes focused on the talismans remaining on the coffin. With a pop, the final two talismans flew off of the coffin and the Harmonious Bond Sect disciples immediately scattered from the scene.

At that moment, an explosion occurred from the coffin, filling the air with a fishy scent with the appearance of two vague silhouettes, one black and one white. They shot out from the coffins and disappeared off into different directions.

The slowest of the male and female disciples released a blood-curdling shriek. Two people in Daoist robes had pounced on the two disciples and tore out their throats, drinking the blood essence that poured out. When the other Harmonious Bond Sect cultivators saw this, they sighed with relief and stopped.

As for the cultivators from the other sects, they couldn't help but

reveal their shock.

An old man with draped hair walked out from the sect division and calmly said, “Good. Since the devils have consumed the blood essence of a virgin male and female, they won’t suddenly feed on any others.”

Afterwards, he raised his arms to the two silhouettes and revealed two green-bronze plates engraved with talisman characters. The two plates then shot streaks of grey light towards the corpse devil’s heads, embedding inside them.

The two corpse devils trembled and ceased sucking up the blood. They slowly stood up and stiffly flew over to the front of the cultivator army. At that moment, their true appearance could be seen, arousing many cries of astonishment.

The Yin Yang Corpse Devils were actually a young man and woman, both possessing delicate appearances. The man had sharp eyebrows and bright eyes while the woman possessed an elegant dignity. But in contrast to their lifelike features, their eyes were completely lifeless.

Were it not for the remnant blood still dripping from the corner of their mouths, they would’ve appeared to be a common pair of Dao companions. However, they released an indescribable odor of decay nearby them, bewildering anyone who smelled it.

The old man with the draped hair poured spiritual power into the bronze plates and suddenly, the grey light began to envelop the two corpse devils. They remained silent and still as the old man quickly chanted an incantation, the bronze plate in his hand slowly floating in the air.

Suddenly, the old man struck the bronze plates with two spell seals, causing both of the bronze plates to emit thumb-thick beams of light into the foreheads of both of their foreheads.

A radiant light suddenly shined from the two corpse devils’ eyes.

The old man with draped hair put away the bronze plates and pointed to the huge azure bird, commanding, “Go!”

# Chapter 778: A Huge Ape

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The Yin Yang Devils turned their gaze and suddenly stood side by side before turning into a gust of green wind, a rotting stench left in their wake. It appeared they were heading in the direction of the Moulan Sacred Bird.

The cultivators immediately sighed in relief. They felt more confident with these blood-sucking monsters at their front.

The corpse devils' green winds appeared to travel slowly, but in reality, they were amazingly quick. In the blink of an eye, they had already traveled halfway and gradually disappeared from sight. The others glanced at this with astonishment and they couldn't help but turn their gaze to draped-haired old man controlling the two corpses. He appeared entirely calm, much to the relief of the many cultivators watching him.

On the spell warrior's side of the battlefield, the huge azure bird was calmly releasing its demonfire to rigidly suppress the Seven Great Truths Cultivators.

Able to take advantage of the world's spiritual Qi, the bird was able to easily gather all the fire spirit power within a five kilometer radius into its body, easily transforming it into azure demonflame without the need to consume spiritual power from its body. Additionally, as time went by, it was able to draw in even more fire spirit power. This was the difference between Deity Transformation stage and what is lower. It was for reasons like this that whenever a Deity Transformation stage cultivator appeared in the Heavenly South, they were able to sweep across the continent without fear of anything else.

From the very beginning, the Seven Great Truths cultivators were only able to tangle down the beast with the might of their magic treasures. But as time passed by, not only was the Devil Isolating Formation broken, but the surging flames that were

trapped had escaped as well. As of current, it took them all their might to preserve their own lives.

It was then that the demon bird ceased its flame and bewilderedly glance around as if it had felt something strange. With a sudden cry, the bird spread out its wings and an azure ring of light surged around it covering an area of over three hundred meters.

With a crackle, a nearly indiscernible cloud of green smoke appeared amidst the light. Afterwards, the Yin Yang Devils appeared from within.

With their concealment broken, the two devils harshly shrieked and shuffled about before undergoing to transformation. With red hair and green skin, their bodies grew to six meters in height. Their fingers trembled, launching several tens of threads of grey light towards the huge bird.

The azure bird paused before screeching in fury. When it saw the devils' attacks, it opened its mouth and shot out a pillar of azure flame from its mouth. At that same moment, it spread out its wings and engulfed its body in a storm of azure flames, sweeping up a forty-meter-tall wave of azure flame to the two devils.

Through some unknown technique, the Yin Yang Devils were able to overcome this attack by emitting threads of undead Qi, allowing them to withstand the attack of demonflames and continue their assault.

With the focus from the Sacred Bird being taken off of the Seven Great Truths cultivators, they were able to join their treasures together in renewed spirits and display their strength once more.

Just as the two corpse devils and the Seven Great Truths cultivators were dealing with the Moulan's Sacred Bird, the two corpse devils suddenly flashed with grey light and darted behind the huge bird, making its way past the sea of flames and directly towards the ancient lanterns not far away.

When Spell Warrior Le saw this, she calmly struck one of the lanterns with a spell seal, suddenly stirring the lanterns to release an ember of flame. In the blink of an eye, nine embers began to twirl around one another before suddenly transforming into nine azure firebirds. They spread their wings and met the two devil's charge.

The two devils met them in a fierce display. Grey undead Qi drifting from their mouths, their fingers turned into claws before tearing apart the firebirds as they blurred from sight, their claws pulsing with grey light.

But in that moment of delay, the huge bird suddenly turned its head to the two corpse devils and spouted a huge azure cloud from its mouth, sweeping them inside it. In the blink of an eye, the Yin Yang Devils were caught inside another sea of flame.

When the Seven Great Truths Cultivators saw this, their hearts sank.

At that moment, the shriveled old spell warrior saw this in the distance and smiled before speaking to the black-robed woman. The woman then turned her eyes to the battlefield and nodded, noticing that both spell warriors and cultivators appeared equally exhausted.

Her lips moved, giving the command. A group of black-robed men flew out from the spell warrior camp, arranged in a single row. Each of them carrying seven bulging bags at their waist. With this, the black-robed woman opened her mouth and spat out a small exquisite flag. It was only two inches large and shined with faint black light, but as it traveled through the air, it expanded to the size of three meters.

The woman coldly pointed at the treasure and soon, the black flag trembled and shined with black light as it streaked through the sky, disappearing from sight in the blink of an eye. A short moment later, the entire battlefield was enveloped in a dark wind

as black clouds began to cover the sky, spreading darkness throughout the battlefield.

When the cultivators in battle saw this, they couldn't help but look up in alarm.

With the sky blackened, the black-robed men tossed out the storage pouches from their waist. Incantation leaving their lips, dense black fogs and eerie winds spouted out from the bags. In the blink of an eye, the land was covered in a black mist with vague, shuffling silhouettes emerging from within it. Scales glittered from them as if they were armored troops.

This astonishing scene was to the dread of the cultivators who watched it. Long Han in particular had frowned tensely as he inwardly sighed.

Soon, the bags finished emitting the mist with armies slowly emerging from within. The silhouette's true appearance finally became clear. They were fleshless corpses armored in copper.

Although these refined corpses swayed as they walked with their armor clanking as they moved, each of these corpses had eyes shining with green light, exposed fangs, and a cultivation at Foundation Establishment stage. There were even three larger corpse lords that possessed Core formation cultivation, their shifting eyes displaying a deeper intelligence.

A cultivator from behind Long Han screamed with alarm, "Copper-armored Corpses! How can there be so many of them? There are thousands of them!"

Long Han coldly said, "It's nothing! With a Devilish Sect from the Jin Empire assisting them, these armored corpses come as no surprise. If this were the start of the battle, we would have nothing to fear. But now that we've exhausted ourselves with the spell warriors, the Copper-armored Corpses will certainly defeat us. All we can do is head out and deal with them."

When the others heard this, they glanced at each other and bitterly smiled. Even if they were to leave their posts and attack, the spell warrior would release their reserves as well. The battle would be already lost.

As for the three Great Heavenly South Cultivators and the Moulan Sages, the battle was yet to be concluded; the sounds of their battle could still be heard from up above. In this fierce battle, it was unknown which side had the upper hand. They couldn't be relied upon.

Just as Long Han and these other cultivators found themselves in a moment of helplessness and were preparing themselves to fight, they suddenly heard explosive howls from a distance. Silver light shined upon the entire battlefield when a huge beast appeared amidst the light: a seventy-meter-tall ape with hair as black as ink, fur as sharp as arrows, eyes as lit like crimson flames, and a horrendously-shaped nose.

When the huge ape appeared, it turned its head to look at the Copper-armored Corpses down below. It hammered its chest before excitedly roaring and smashing its limbs on the ground, chasing towards a nearby group of Copper-armored Corpses.

When the Copper-armored Corpses saw the huge ape growing closer, they each rose into the air without warning and spouted threads of black Qi, enveloping the ape in a huge black cloud.

While the refined corpses didn't possess very high cultivation, when such a great number simultaneously spouted out undead Qi, even a Nascent Soul cultivator wouldn't dare to receive the attack.

However, the huge ape didn't have any intention of dodging out of the way. Instead, it snorted at the black Qi, and spouted a dense beam of yellow light from each nostril, transforming into a yellow cloud that swept away at the black mist with lightning speed. It was quickly absorbed before being absorbed back into the huge ape's mouth.

As the refined corpses possessed little intelligence, they remained still as this happened.

Taking advantage of this situation, the huge ape continuously snorted and yellow mist surged on, absorbing the black threads of Qi into its folds.

The undead Qi from the refined corpses disappeared and each of them fell to the ground, reverting back into ordinary corpses. As for the clouds of grey Qi in the air, they had slowly scattered. A short moment later, several hundreds of the refined corpses had been swept clean by the huge ape. It then licked its lips and gazed at the other refined corpses with a trace of desire.

The ordinary refined corpses knew no fear and remained motionless at the side. However, the three Core Formation stage corpse lords became restless at the sight and their eyes revealed a trace of fear and hesitation. Both armies were in complete awe of the abilities that the huge ape had displayed.

The black-robed woman was particularly aghast. She gave the shriveled old man a quick word before personally shooting towards the huge ape in a streak of yellow light. When she saw the huge ape opened its mouth and was on the verge of releasing yellow light, she flusteredly waved her arm, forming a ten-meter-long blade of purple light that chopped down toward the huge ape.

But before the blade could strike at the huge ape, thunder rang, and silver light appeared. An azure-robed youth abruptly appeared on the huge ape's shoulder and he also waved his arm, summoning forth a blue light shield in front of it.

With a loud clank, blue and purple light intertwined. An instant later, the blue shield and purple blade recoiled from one another. The azure-robed stumbled, his face in shock.

The youth glanced at the black-robed woman and indifferently asked, "A devil cultivator?" He then twisted his hands, summoned forth various-sized arcs of golden lightning all around him. They

jumped all over his body, emitting a blinding golden light.

Han Li had appeared!

# Chapter 779: A Ruthless Attack

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“Divine Devilbane Lightning!” The black-robed woman shouted in alarm. Just as she thought to retaliate in fury from having her attack countered, she suddenly saw the lightning emitting from Han Li’s body, a net of crackling thunder rushing to envelop her. Horror on her face, her body transformed into smoke as she shot back, attempting to avoid the lightning at all costs.

With an emotionless face, Han Li unfolded his wings and disappeared from sight. When she saw this, the black-robed woman immediately recalled what she had heard about Han Li and hastily formed an incantation gesture with her hands, her body of smoke blurring and shifting into eight identical copies, each one standing side by side.

Each of them appeared real, and took actions of their own, splitting up and scattering in different directions in streaks of yellow light. It was unknown which copy was the true!

In a flash of silver light, Han Li appeared where the woman original stood, thunder ringing behind him. He glanced at the scattered streaks of yellow light in a calm manner. There was even a trace of a sneer on his face. Spiritual power entering his eyes, blue light shined from deep within his pupils, activating the Brightsight Spirit Eyes.

Han Li raised his head and peered into the distance. The silhouettes within the yellow light were all dim and possessed sparse spiritual Qi; they were all fakes.

Han Li’s heart trembled and he hastily looked around him to suddenly discover that a nearly invisible thread of smile was silently approaching him from behind.

The woman had used an illusion technique to capture his attention, and decided to use this gap in attention to seize the opportunity to launch a surprise attack on him rather than escape.

The woman was both capable and bold. Were it not for his Brightsight Spirit Eyes, he wouldn't have been able to detect her. The woman's evasion techniques are no less skillful than Silvermoon's, spiritual sense wasn't enough to find any trace of her.

Shocked to the core, Han Li silently turned around and flew straight towards the huge ape as if he had no further intention to chase after the black-robed woman.

The faint thread of smoke had already arrived about ten meters away from Han Li. It paused and the woman's body suddenly manifested in the air. An inch-long blade of yellow light shined from her hand in an attempt to strike Han Li from behind. From how it appeared, it seemed she was about to incisively strike at Han Li's heart. If her attack struck true, his body was certain to be destroyed.

But in the moment the woman was about to strike, Han Li turned around in a blur, his eyes immediately locking onto her. He opened his mouth, shooting golden light from his mouth.

"Ah!" The black-robed woman's face turned deathly pale and she hastily attempted to dodge, but she was too late. She couldn't avoid the attack from such a close distance.

Bang. A bolt of golden lightning shot out of Han Li's mouth and directly struck the woman's shoulder, filling the air with a burning scent. The woman screamed before falling down from the sky.

Han Li flapped his wings, disappearing with thunder ringing behind him. Suddenly, Han Li reappeared behind the woman with a single hand enveloped in faint blue flames. He gently pressed it against her neck.

Woosh. A dense layer of blue ice covered her entire body, isolating her from any other sensation but the cold. She then continued to fall from the sky, clad in ice.

Han Li motionlessly floated in the air, already prepared with a handful of lightning arcing from his hand. He released the lightning and caught the iced woman inside of it. Then with a malicious glint from his eyes, golden light brilliantly shined around her iced figure and in a series of explosions, the black-robed woman turned into specks of icy light before disappearing without a trace.

The sole thing that remained in the lightning net was the woman's Nascent Soul. The Nascent Soul's complexion was deathly white as if it held the Divine Devilbane Lightning in complete fear.

Han Li glanced at her and just as he was about to exterminate the Nascent Soul, the Nascent Soul shrieked, "You cannot kill me! I am the Dao Companion of the Jin Empire's Sifting Yin Sect Master. If you kill me, my sect will not rest until you are dead!"

"The Yin Sifting Sect Master's Dao Companion!" Han Li coldly watched the Nascent Soul for a moment before suddenly relaxing his grip on the lightning and turning away. The woman's Nascent Soul was stunned for a moment before joyously flying through the gap, her mind filled with malicious thoughts of revenge.

But just when she was thirty meters away from Han Li, the net suddenly tightened once more, tightly binding the Nascent Soul into the net. Soon after, thunder roared and the black-robed woman's Nascent Soul turned to ash.

"Now that I've already destroyed your body, how could I possibly allow you to the chance for revenge?" Han Li muttered to himself helplessly and deeply sighed before turning his attention back to the huge ape.

Although the series of events in which Han Li had exterminated the woman was complex, the matter had only occurred in the blink of an eye. The shriveled old spell warrior was already flying towards her in a streak of golden light during her time of danger.

But in that moment, a strange pink light appeared nearby and turned into a large pink cloud, directly enveloping the shriveled spell warrior.

In a series of rumbles, the shriveled old spell warrior managed to scatter the pink mist, and the light around him scattered to reveal an ashen complexion. He rigidly stared at the pink mist with eyes of rage. He truly didn't know what the Yin Sifting Sect Master would do when he found out his Dao Companion was killed. He could only grit his teeth in rage at Han Li and whoever it was that blocked him.

A series of soft chuckles came from the pink cloud and soon it disappeared to reveal a handsome youth with a soft face. He was the Harmonious Bond Sect's Devil Cloudpart.

Devil Cloudpart chuckled and glanced at Han Li. "Fellow Daoist Han, now that I've helped you, the debt is repaid."

Having just flown back from killing the black-robed woman, Han Li replied, "It was only a chance matter that I freed you. I wasn't looking to be repaid. More importantly, Divine Sage Zhu isn't something the two of us can deal with, and he isn't alone."

Once that was said, Han Li swept his gaze past the shriveled old man. In addition to the black-robed spell warriors that were doing their utmost to stop the huge ape's massacre, there was an army of spell warriors flying across the horizon. As bold as Devil Cloudpart may be, his expression immediately revealed surprise when he saw their great numbers.

Earlier, Han Li had managed to rescue Devil Cloudpart from the barrier in a fluke by using two of the lightning beads. But just as Han Li was making plans to fight together with him, he suddenly saw the Yin Sifting Sect release a vast quantity of Copper-armored Corpses. It was then that Han Li decided to release the Weeping Soul Beast, curious about its abilities now that he had refined the Weeping Soul Pearl in its entirety. As soon as it had appeared it

caused an uproar with great enthusiasm and began to vigorously absorb the refined corpses around it.

But what came as a surprise was how effective the Weeping Soul beast was against corpses that cultivators have refined. Han Li knew that the Weeping Soul Beast was adept at devouring the souls of demons and ghosts, but it seemed its strange abilities had undergone an evolution along with its body. A surprise to be sure, but a welcome one.

Now that they've found themselves facing so many spell warriors, Han Li and Devil Cloudbreak glanced at each other, both intending to flee. However, the Weeping Soul Beast was still rampaging amongst the armies refined corpses. Han Li was unwilling to abandon it there.

Just as Han Li thought to use the Weeping Soul Pearl to order it to retreat, he suddenly heard roaring laughter from behind him. "Have no fear, Fellow Daoist Han! Since you've released this great beast to deal with the refined corpses, we will help you deal these spell warriors."

When Han Li heard Long Han's voice, he felt his heart stir. He quickly turned and saw Long Han a hundred meters away, leading a squad of cultivators.

Han Li was delighted. It was no wonder the spell warriors didn't immediately launch an attack. It seemed they were treating the situation carefully, having seen cultivator reinforcements were approaching them as well.

When Long Han saw Han Li's demonform self, a trace of astonishment momentarily appeared on his face, but he soon turned a blind eye to it. Now was not the time to ask about it.

The cultivators were all watching the spell warriors across from them. The entire battlefield had already gone through a bitter struggle, and the time has come for the decisive battle.

Both sides had their own victories and defeats as well as a vast number of losses. However, these battles weren't merely spars. Those that lost the battle, lost their lives, and those that won would have to continue the fight, exhausted.

Long Han had sent other cultivators to keep Tian Zhong occupied, freeing his Dao Companion Feng Bing for a different battle. It was only when they were together that he would mobilize their true strength. Now that matters have reached this stage, Long Han had nothing else to say to the shriveled old spell warrior.

Long Han softly waved his arm. The troops that he had preserved until now were elites. They promptly summoned their magic treasures and began their momentous attack, their bodies glowing with bright light.

The spell warriors they were facing were unordinary as well, and they summoned their spiritual Qi to confront them. Suddenly, the final confrontation between each army was about to begin.

Although the spell warriors had an additional late Nascent Soul spell warrior, with Devil Cloudpart present along with four other mid Nascent Soul cultivators, they would be able to forcefully restrain him. Han Li thought to join the attack against the shriveled old man's spell warriors, but when he swept his gaze over to the Sacred Bird, his expression vastly changed.

# Chapter 780: The Blood Ghost vs the Stone Giant

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The Seven Great Truths Cultivators and the Yin Yang Devils were able to withstand the Moulan Sacred Bird, but after a short amount of time, they soon found themselves on the disadvantage.

The two devils were handling themselves relatively well and were able to release Yin winds and undead Qi to ward off the azure flames. However, the Seven Great Truths cultivators were now running out of magic power and they could no longer endure.

There were two old men that were particularly strained, a red-faced old man with dimming spiritual light and a pale-faced old man with white Qi visibly wavering around his nose and mouth. The two were clearly pushing past their limits using secret techniques.

Han Li frowned and glanced at some dead cultivators nearby before looking at the spell warrior, who was standing guard nearby the ancient lanterns.

“Look after the Weeping Soul Beast and don’t let anything happen to it. Withdraw it if it is ever in danger. I’m going to head off to exterminate the ancient lanterns.” Han Li spoke in an inaudible voice and tossed the Weeping Soul Pearl behind him. In a flash of weak white light, the pearl disappeared from sight.

“Yes! Master, please be careful. That peacock’s abilities are truly powerful.” Silvermoon’s worried voice came from behind him. Han Li calmly nodded and when he saw that nobody nearby paid him any notice, he blurred from sight and disappeared.

Han Li used the nameless Qi retraining technique to conceal himself. Although Han Li’s concealment techniques were vastly inferior to Silvermoon’s techniques, this Qi retraining technique was able to rival her own.

Han Li had reached the peak of this technique. Not only could he completely erase the spiritual Qi from his own body, he was also able to forcefully conceal the aura from his own body. As of current, not only was he concealing himself from Spell Warrior Le, but also the unfathomably profound Moulan Sacred Bird.

In the distant, Spell Warrior Le faintly revealed a trace of worry when she saw the cultivators tangle with the shriveled old man. Although she still guarded the ancient lanterns, she turned to the huge bird and beseeched the bird in an ancient language.

When the azure flame bird heard this, it couldn't help but pause and turn around to glance at the shriveled old man's battle. With a trace of disdain from its eyes, it immediately turned its head back and shot several balls of azure flames into the sky, repulsing the Seven Great Truths cultivators and leaving them in confusion. Then with a clear cry, it spread its wings and took to the skies.

It circled once in the air before facing the direction of the shriveled old man's battle. Then with a tremble of its wings, a large expanse of azure feathers began to drop down from its body, and in a flash of light, each of the feathers turned into foot-long azure firebirds. Without any need for a command, these several hundreds of firebirds cawed and spread their wings, shooting towards the battle.

Spell Warrior Le felt relieved at the scene. With these phantom birds, it was only a matter of time before victory was theirs.

At that moment, she suddenly heard a series of explosions from the center of the battlefield. Spell Warrior Le bewilderedly glanced over at the source of the noise. Han Li who was carefully

sneaking closer to Spell Warrior Le was also astonished by the noise.

At the very heart of the battlefield, a most important contest was taking place. The Myriad Soul Formation, the mist that formed under the combined effort of several tens of Ghost Spirit Sect

disciples, had finally come to a stop and motionlessly floated in the air. Blocking it was an army of hollow spirit beasts formed by several Moulan Sages as well as the stone giant.

Under the command of the Moulan Sages, the stone giant moved to block the Myriad Soul Formation once it defeated the Heavenly South cultivators attacking it. The recent noise was actually the stone giant slapping its hand down against the ghost mist.

Before its palm even landed, countless boulders fell from its hand. No matter how confident were the Ghost Spirit Sect disciples in the Myriad Soul spell formation, they didn't dare to receive the attack. With a prompt hiss, the ghost mist dodged out of the way, traveling a distance of a hundred meters before stopping.

When the Heavenly South and Moulan combatants saw this, they all realized that the battle had reached its most critical point. As a result, the Ghost Spirit Sect elder in charge of the formation came to a decision to use the spell formation's killing maneuver, regardless of the cost.

Before the stone giant could further pursue the ghost mist, a gloomy incantation was uttered by the cultivators within the ghost mist. As ghostly wails screamed from the mist, a pillar of crimson light soared into the sky and the eerie black ghost mist followed suit as if tainted by the light, turning crimson as the incantations continued.

When the two Moulan Sages who were standing on top of the stone giant's shoulders saw this, they appeared bewildered. A short moment, the incantations came to a stop and the crimson mist roiled to reveal several tens of various colored lights fleeing from the mist at utmost speed. They were the cultivators from the Ghost Spirit Sect.

The two Moulan Sages were at a loss at the sight.

At that moment, crimson mist came to life after being abandoned

by the Ghost Spirit Sect cultivators. Several various-sized tentacles intermittently emerged from the mist and wildly danced around as the center of the mist began to rapidly shrink.

The Ghost Spirit Sect Elder in charge of the formation turned to face it after flying twenty meters away. He glanced at the crimson mist and thought, ‘Having absorbed so much blood essence from the spell warriors and the voluntary blood sacrifice, surely it will succeed!’

As the Ghost Spirit Sect elder watched with restlessness, the crimson mist shrunk to over half its size before beginning to squirm. When the two Moulan Sages controlling the stone giant saw this, they immediately ordered the giant to fiercely stomp down upon it.

Suddenly, the level ground was obscured from sight by sinister yellow Yin winds, chilling to the core. Even the stone giant couldn’t help but pause for the moment.

By the time the Moulan spell warriors could see what was happening, they astonishedly discovered that yellow gusts of Yin wind were surrounding the crimson mist, obscuring it from view. But then the yellow winds were forcefully blown open by a crimson silhouette as it emerged from within.

When the two Moulan Sages saw the appearance of the silhouette, they felt their breaths turn cold. It was a thirty-meter-tall Bloodvile Ghost.

Its devilish head had two horns and two glistening fangs, both incisively sharp, and a ponytail seemed to form behind it. Its arms appeared to be sculpted out of wood with dagger-like fingers and a layer of translucent scales seemed to wrap around them.

Although vile ghosts were ordinarily said to be huge, it was several times smaller when compared to the stone giant. However, the ghost showed no fear and instead screamed at the giant as it stared at it with a cold glint in its eye.

It lowered its head and its body darted like an arrow, launching itself at the lower leg of the stone giant. It extended its claws and swiped, immediately cleaving off a large portion of stone.

The two Moulan Sages couldn't allow this to continue and immediately had the stone giant to form fists and strike down at lightning speed, knocking the Bloodvile Ghost over thirty meters away. The strike had blown off half of its head, but it stood up as if nothing had happened. Then in a flash of crimson light, its head was restored as it charged to the stone giant once more.

In the two Sage's furious alarm, they ordered the hollow spirit beasts to attack and released their own magic treasures to assist the giant. As for the Ghost Spirit Sect cultivators that had fled from the ghost mist, they immediately turned around and joined the battle. Explosions continuously ruptured as crimson light continuously flashed from the battlefield.

Spell Warrior Le frowned at the sight of this and continued to watch the battle in silence. As a Moulan Sage, she knew of the might of the stone giant and was surprised to see that the Heavenly South cultivators were able to match it. But she wasn't overly concerned over the matter. So long as the stone giant could persist for a moment more, she could call for the Moulan Sacred Bird to exterminate them and decide the battle. With that thought, she glanced at the huge bird a short distance away.

As if knowing that it was a decisive moment on the battlefield, the Moulan Sacred Bird exerted the entirety of its fire spirit Qi to envelope three-hundred-meters of area into an azure sea of flame. In a spread of its wings, it separated the seven old men and the Yin Yang Devils.

The sea of flames down below split into two, separating the two devils from one another. With two devils neutered, it then focused a majority of its attacks on the Seven Great Truths cultivators. Unable to endure, these seven old men soon found their lives to be in danger.

Spell Warrior Le was satisfied by the scene. When she turned around and saw that the lanterns were still half-full with oil, her heart appeared particularly steadfast.

Suddenly, the woman raised her brow and her eyes narrowed. In a swift motion, she summoned an ember of fire from one of the lanterns and in a wave of her hand, it disappeared. Azure light flashed in an area a hundred meters away, followed by a shout of alarm. A silhouette appeared with his body sparkling in azure light; a layer of flame enveloped him.

Soon after, Spell Warrior Le formed an incantation gesture with her hand, combusting the flame around the azure light barrier. Then with a miserable scream, the flame turned the figure into ash.

# Chapter 781: Fight for the Lantern

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"To think of concealing yourself near the Bright Origin Lanterns. You truly are seeking death!" The woman muttered without the mind to carefully examine the results. It was enough knowing that the victim was a Heavenly South cultivator.

Ever since she ignited the ancient lanterns, she had six cultivators come after them one after another. After all, the huge bird only came into existence once the ancient lanterns were summoned, and they remained burning ever since. It took only a glance to know that there was something strange about them, so those that were skilled at concealment techniques thought to exterminate the lantern's flames. However, not a single one of them were successful; they were all exterminated by the woman's flames.

At that moment, Han Li was several hundred meters away from her. When he saw that the nameless cultivator had been effortlessly killed by the woman, he felt his heart shiver. He ceased his gradual approach towards the woman.

Although the woman simply muttered to herself, Han Li was able to hear her words using his astonishing spiritual sense. Han Li then turned his gaze to the ancient lanterns not far away. He rubbed his chin as he pondered to himself. They seemed to be an extraordinary existence. Not only were they able to summon that demon bird, but they also had the ability to see through concealment. It would prove truly troublesome.

Han Li's expression wavered for a long while and his brow shifted, having finally come to a decision. He slapped his storage pouch and fished out a few items. He then glanced at a few spirit beast pouches at his waist with a smile.

At short moment later, Spell Warrior Le appeared vastly more on guard as she sat cross-legged in front of the ancient lanterns, a

lotus mirage faintly visible around her. She was staring at them, fusing her spiritual sense with them and allowing her to sense any movements with a hundred meters of them.

A flash of light suddenly appeared a hundred meters away to reveal a dozen tall apes. Their bold appearance caused the woman to look at them with surprise. There was another entire row of apes standing behind the first. They all raised their arms, shooting several tens of beams of light from their hands.

“Puppets!” Spell Warrior Le was shocked, and soon frowned when she discovered that they were well-crafted. She cautiously looked around, failing to spot who was controlling the puppets.

Spell Warrior Le paid little mind to the light beam attacks. With a single incantation gesture, the lotus mirage flickered and easily blocked them. Afterwards, the woman’s body blurred and she picked off an ember of flame from one of the lanterns.

This time, the woman didn’t immediately release the ember. Rather, she kept it floating in her hand as she stared at the ancient lanterns in preparation for any strange changes.

In a mere short moment, the woman’s expression stirred and she opened her mouth, spitting out a breath of spiritual Qi onto her hand. The flame then blazed with azure light before disappearing without a trace. She turned her head and glanced at an area a hundred meters away.

With a light pop, a silhouette appeared, covered in azure light. Then with an incantation gesture, the woman willed the flames to combust, a cold grin of satisfaction appearing on her lips.

“Yi! Why are they still alive?” The woman’s smile froze and discovered that this silhouette wasn’t instantly incinerated as with the previous cultivators, nor did it show any sign of struggle.

In her alarm, she hastily examined the figure. “This person is... no, not a person! It’s a puppet!”

The silhouette appeared the same shape as Han Li, but its expression and body was completely stiff. Additionally, it appeared as if it weren't being burned by the azure flames in the slightest.

"Not good!" In that instant, something immediately came to mind and she hastily turned her head to look at the ancient lanterns, reexamining her surroundings with her spiritual sense. Meanwhile, a silhouette appeared sixty meters away in a flash of azure light. Then with a ring of thunder, he disappeared in a flash of light.

When Spell Warrior Le saw this, she formed an incantation gesture with both her hands in furious alarm, striking the lanterns with successive spell seals.

However, she was too late. Lightning flashed beside the ancient lanterns, followed by the appearance of a youth. Soon after, a giant black-red hand was summoned in the air, growing to the size of three meters before fiercely swiping at the ancient lanterns.

"This person recognizes the main lantern! Only the caster could possibly know which one is the original. Even a late Nascent Soul cultivator shouldn't be able to see through them!" When the woman saw this, she was shocked to the core.

In this short distance, the large hand and Spell Warrior Le's spell seal struck the ancient lantern at the same time. The lantern flashed with life as it underwent a transformation, but in the process, the huge hand grabbed onto it, burning with black Yin flames in an attempt to exterminate it.

At nearly the same moment, the other eight lanterns began to tremble, disappearing one by one in a flicker of light, dissipating into wisps of smoke.

"No!" Spell Warrior Le blanched at the sight of this. With gritted teeth, she raised her hands, enveloping the black hand with a large lotus mirage in an attempt to seize back the ancient lantern. However, her attack was predicted. With the ancient lantern in its

grasp, it immediately shot back without the slightest delay.

Then with a cold snort, lightning rang once more, and both the black-red hand and the silhouette disappeared. In the following moment, the silhouette re-appeared beside the puppet trapped in azure light, ancient lantern in hand. Han Li had used surprise to his greatest advantage.

“You will not leave.” Spell Warrior Le flusteredly glanced at the azure bird and discovered that the Sacred Bird had yet to disappear. Her heart determined, she loudly screamed, enveloping her body in azure light as she chased after him in a clear wind.

Han Li’s expression grew sullen and white light flashed from his hands. With the ancient lantern placed inside his storage pouch, he unfolded his wings and disappeared to another location a hundred meters away. At the same time, the woman appeared where he originally stood, pursuing him as a transformed wind.

Han Li’s gaze stirred and he suddenly formed a hand incantation with one of his hands, uttering, “Explode.” At that moment, the lightning bead in the puppet’s mouth ruptured. With golden lightning and azure flames intertwined, not only did over half of the puppet disintegrate, but it also caught Spell Warrior Le that was nearby.

The woman’s lotus mirage moved to protect her. Although its master acted without regard for her safety, each of the lotus petals glowed and rigidly blocked the attack.

However, the lightning bead was beyond powerful. Although she hadn’t suffered any damage, she knocked back ten meters, dissolving her wind movement technique for a time.

Han Li sighed. Although he felt the lightning bead hadn’t reached its full potential, he blinked away once more and fled into the distance. By the time Spell Warrior Le regained her bearings, Han Li was already over three hundred meters away.

Spell Warrior Le gritted her teeth and was just about to give pursuit when the remaining half of the blown puppet began to release a monstrous sound. Having just suffered from it before, she hastily looked towards it in alarm to see it in azure light. Soon after, the remaining half of it began to scatter into swarms of tri-colored beetles.

Spell Warrior Le was forced to confront them and she hastily protected herself, shrouding her body in a white lotus. However, the tri-colored beetles instantly condensed to form several large shields that blocked her path.

Each time the woman attempted to use her wind movement technique, her casting was interrupted with wave after wave of attacks. In her immense fury, she launched series of spirit techniques to strike the beetles, only to find that they were ineffective.

At that moment, she shockingly discovered that the tri-colored beetles appeared nearly identical to the Gold Devouring Beetles apart from the specks of black on their shell. Startled, she immediately reached the wood spirit treasure in her storage pouch to trap these flying insects, but before she could, the beetles scattered with a buzz.

The woman changed expressions several times from shock and she hastily glanced into the distance. At an unknown time, Han Li had activated a concealment technique and already disappeared without a trace. Spell Warrior Le's complexion changed between red and white as she remained still in the air, at a complete loss of what to do.

At that same moment, the Moulan Sacred Bird just breathed out an azure fireball, destroying the protective treasure of one of the Great Truths cultivators. Just as it rejoiced and was about to shred the cultivator with its talons, it suddenly felt spiritual power wildly drain from its body.

In its shock, the bird was unable to injure the cultivator and it hastily turned its head around to discover that the ancient lantern had disappeared. The huge bird could only shriek in panic as its body quickly shrank, having instantly lost its ability to control fire spirit Qi. As for the sea of azure flames, it intensely burned for a moment more before disappearing without a trace much to the astonishment of the Seven Great Truths Cultivators.

The Yin Yang Devils transformed into a green wind as soon as they were freed and fiercely struck at the weakened azure bird. By then, the bird had already shrunk to a meter long. Its eyes were filled with resentment as it stared at the two approaching devils without the slightest intention of dodging. Before the twin devils could strike it, the bird had exploded, transforming into countless specks of azure light that soon faded away.

Once this happened, the Yin Yang Devils paused and simply stood in the sky.

“How did this happen?” One of the old men asked with joy, having escaped death. At that moment, his magic power was already drained and he was nearly defenseless.

“Look over there. It seems they’ve had some problem with the treasure they used to summon the demon bird. The ancient lantern is no longer there.” The leading old man let out a long sigh and he swept his gaze over to where the ancient lanterns once floated. He appeared completely relieved as if he had escaped calamity. He felt as if he had been only a mere moment from death.

# Chapter 782: A Distant Message

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The Moulan Sacred Bird's disappearance was soon known to both sides of the battlefield, causing a massive turnaround in morale. The spell warriors found themselves vastly in shock, and the cultivators with their spirits roused.

When the shriveled old man and Tian Zhong saw this while they were in battle, they wore an expression of disbelief. The Sacred Bird can't have disappeared because it ran out of lantern oil. The only possibility was that a cultivator has extinguished the Bright Origin Lantern.

The two Divine Sages couldn't have known that the Moulan Lineage treasure had fallen into Han Li's grasp once again. From how they saw it, with their late Nascent Soul stage cultivators occupied and their other cultivators suppressed by the Sacred Bird, there was no possibility of a breach of Spell Warrior Le's defenses. This terrible reality has come as a vast surprise.

Han Li had stealthily arrived by the side of the Weeping Soul Beast before making a reappearance. By that point, the Weeping Soul Beast had already exterminated a majority of the refined corpses. The remaining fraction of them had been hastily withdrawn by the Yin Sifting Sect's cultivators as it was only a matter of time before all of the Copper-armored corpses were eliminated.

Having absorbed so much undead Qi, the Weeping Soul beast grew even larger and its fur shined with even stronger black light. It appeared completely strengthened.

Of course, there were many black-robed cultivators and spell warriors who wished to exterminate the huge ape. However, Long Han fully understood that this strange huge ape was the key to dealing with the Copper-armored Corpses and immediately dispatched men to protect it.

There would occasionally be those that made it past, but Silvermoon would lead them astray with her illusion techniques, sending them off to their doom.

By the time Han Li made it back, the Weeping Soul Beast was finishing off the final Copper-armored Corpses that have yet to be withdrawn. He waved his arm at the beast, and in a flicker of black light, the beast shrunk and flew into a spirit pouch at his waist in a streak of black light. When Silvermoon saw this, she approached him from behind.

Having withdrawn the Weeping Soul Beast, Han Li thought to say something further to Silvermoon when a kilometer of the sky was suddenly covered in dark clouds, countless bolts of green lightning flashing from within. Han Li glanced at the sky in awe.

“Who is it? Who is it that killed my wife!? I will take your soul and wipe it away!” The thunderous roar of the Yin Sifting Sect Master echoed through the skies. When Han Li heard this, he felt his heart thump and he gloomily watched him.

“Why are you so quick to leave before victory has been decided. I wish to experience your demonic techniques!” Quickly following after the black-robed man’s shout was Devil Concord’s faint voice. Soon after a grey mist shot out from the sky and blocked the black clouds from moving.

“I have no intention of sparring with you. Leave me be or I won’t hold back.” The piercing voice of the Yin Sifting Sect Master echoed through the sky.

Devil Concord chuckled. “You won’t hold back? Surely you haven’t been holding back during our last fight? Go ahead and show me what you have.”

The black-robed man was silent for a spell before gloomily responding, “Fine. Since you have no sense of propriety, I won’t be wasting any more time on you. I’ll have you witness the might of my sect’s treasure, the Ghost Sifting Banner.” By the end of the

sentence, it seemed almost as if the Sifting Yin Sect Master was smiling.

“The Ghost Sifting Banner?” Devil Concord voice appeared to carry curiosity.

This short exchange of words was cause for astonishment for the cultivators fighting down below. It also came as a great surprise to many that the Yin Sifting Sect’s Dao Companion had already fallen into the hands of the Heavenly South cultivators.

Han Li’s expression remained calm, but once he saw that Devil Concord blocked off the Yin Sifting Sect Master, he felt greatly relieved. He didn’t want to be chased down again by a late Nascent Soul cultivator.

At that moment, everyone believed that Devil Concord and the Yin Sifting Sect Master were about to descend from the skies and carry out their battle down below when something else occurred. A fierce whistle traveled from the direction of the Moulan, followed by the arrival of tensome streaks of various colored lights.

Before the streaks of light approached the spell warriors, someone had already shouted towards them, “Divine Sages, quickly stop the fight! Something had occurred at the Moulan Plains!” The voice spread throughout the battlefield, amplified by some sort of secret technique. Soon after, the streaks of light quickened and entered the battlefield.

When those words were uttered, a majority of the battle had paused as both cultivators and spell warriors glanced over in astonishment. The shriveled old man felt his heart sink at these words and his enemies had ceased attacking from the surprise as well.

The shriveled old spell warrior took advantage of this moment to disengage from the battle and fly towards the tensome spell warriors that had just arrived.

Long Han hesitated for a moment, but he didn't pursue them. The shriveled old man had the advantage in the previous battle. There wasn't anything to be gained by pursuing him.

It was rather strange that these spell warriors had the cultivators hear the message to, but that was a matter to be left alone for another time. Since they've mentioned the Moulan Plains, the matter might have something to do with the Soaring Tribes.

Han Li also watched the shriveled old spell warrior with an odd expression and stared at the tensome streaks of light. The lights all disappeared to reveal variously dressed spell warriors. They were being led by a yellow-robed spell warrior possessing mid Nascent Soul cultivation, much to Han Li's surprise.

It was odd for such a powerful spell warrior to not be assigned to the battlefield. Could it be that he was guarding something important? Regardless, it only added credibility to his words.

As for Devil Concord and the Yin Sifting Sect Master, they had silently disappeared into the clouds.

When the shriveled old spell warrior saw the yellow-robed spell warrior, he wore an incredulous expression. Before he could even speak, the yellow-robed spell warrior flew to his side and spoke to him through voice transmission, causing the old man's expression to grow sullen. Afterwards, the yellow-robed spell warrior handed over a jade slip to him.

The old man received the jade slip and read through it. A short moment, his complexion grew pale. After a quick word with the yellow-robed spell warrior, the old man turned around and gloomily flew towards Long Han.

When he arrived in front of Long Han, he calmly said, "We will not be continuing the war. The battle is over. Otherwise, a third party will reign over us both."

Long Han's expression flickered and he neutrally said, "What do

you mean by that? If you want to stop this battle, you must give me a reason.”

Because of Han Li’s unexpected displays of might, both the Copper-armored Corpses and their Sacred Bird have been dealt with, evening out the battle. Long Han unconsciously felt that the spell warriors were retreating out of fear.

The spell warrior sullenly asked, “Did you send a group of cultivators to infiltrate Soaring Heavens City’s storehouse?”

Long Han hid his alarm and maintained a calm exterior. With a flicker of his eyes, he calmly replied, “It seems you’ve discovered this matter.”

“Discovered?” The old man snorted with a furious expression and calmly said, “Were it not for the interference from the third party, it was likely you would’ve succeeded.”

“The third party?” Long Han frowned upon hearing this.

Saying nothing further, the shriveled old man continued the conversation through voice transmission.

When Long Han heard what he said, he cried out in alarm, unable to maintain his calm. “What, so it was like that?”

“With matters having reached this far, what do I have to gain by lying to you?” The old man bluntly said.

Long Han frowned and grew silent for a moment before suddenly raising his hand and releasing a talisman towards the air. It suddenly transformed into several golden spheres of light and erupted with blinding magnificence. Suddenly, the cultivators ceased attacking and hastily withdrew back to the defensive spell formation. The withdrawing cultivators appeared like swarming bees returning to the nest.

Without the need for any commands, the spell warriors also withdrew. The Bloodvile Ghost and the stone giant were forced to cease fighting in particular. In an instant, the battlefield became

entirely empty.

With both sides separated, it was clear to see that there were many casualties. However, there weren't many losses amongst high-grade cultivators on both sides.

The spell warrior camp was somewhat better off. Although they were somewhat bewildered, they ultimately kept calm. But on the cultivator's side, there was a huge uproar. A few high-grade cultivators were speaking with Long Han to understand the situation. However, Long Han would only bitterly smile in response, to the dissatisfaction of the cultivators around him.

At that moment, the dark clouds and grew mist separated in the sky to reveal the silhouettes of Devil Concord and Yin Sifting Sect Master, coldly staring at each other. At that moment, the sounds of battle in the sky had instantly ceased, and soon after, Wei Wuya and Master Sunreach both flew down from the sky. Their appearances came as a great relief to the cultivator camp.

A short moment later, the scholarly man surnamed Zhu and the dwarf flew down from the sky as well, arousing a series of cheers from the Moulan.

Once the three great cultivators have returned, Long Han began to speak to them. But out of fear of panic, they could only limit the information to a select few. Only cultivators at mid-Nascent Soul stage and a few others were allowed to listen. With a few simple restrictions protecting them, they began to speak of the terrible news that the Moulan had told them.

Due to Han Li's amazing display of might during this battle, it was only natural for him to participate as well.

# Chapter 783: Aftermath of the Battle

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Long Han erected a soundproofing barrier and took out several small flags, forming a barrier of mist around them. Han Li couldn't help but ponder in silence at the sight of this.

There weren't many cultivators present. Leaving out the several eccentrics still stuck inside the blood barriers, there were a little over twenty people. These people represented many of the factions fighting in the battle.

Master Sunreach asked, "Fellow Daoist Long, what has happened? Why do the Moulan no longer wish to fight?"

Wei Wuya said in a doubtful tone, "It is strange. Matters have already reached past that point. Do they have some vain illusion of making peace?"

Long Han bitterly smiled and said, "It isn't some vain illusion. I fear we may not have the option to choose."

Devil Concord frowned and asked with an astonished tone, "How can that be? Has another party interfered with the war?"

Long Han sullenly said, "That's right. The Soaring Tribes have attacked. It is also said that they've joined forces with several sects from the Jin Empire, jointly attacking the Moulan. The greatest of the Moulan Tribes was stationed behind as a rear guard, watching over their homeland, but they were completely annihilated in only a month. News of this had been obstructed so well that the other tribes had no idea of this. It seems the Soaring Tribes wishes to sweep us both away and take our Heavenly South continent for themselves."

When the other cultivators heard this, their hearts grew sullen and silence filled the air. Han Li frowned as well, feeling that matters have taken a turn for the worse. A tiger may have approached them from the front, but there were wolves lying in

wait the entire time.

Daoist Shattered Soul snorted. “Is this information true? It is quite far between the Soaring Tribes and our Heavenly South Continent. Are they not simply bluffing?”

“It can’t be. Eccentric Heavenvenge and the other cultivators to infiltrate Soaring Heavens City were defeated. It is said that the Soaring Tribes spies had the same intentions as our own; they sent a group of cultivators to infiltrate Soaring Heavens City and pillage the Moulan’s storehouse. As a result, Eccentric Heavenvenge came across them, leading to an unexpected discovery.” Then with a helpless tone, Long Han continued, “With regards to the battle, I’m sure everyone understood that the fully deployed forces of the Moulan were slightly inferior to our own, but they carried a dying resolve. Were it not for Fellow Daoist Han’s vast display of might in dealing with the Copper-armored Corpses and the Moulan’s Sacred Bird, I fear we would’ve suffered a huge loss. Although the powers of the Heavenly South had done their utmost, the various sects have all left behind nearly half of their disciples to guard their bases. Had they joined the war, we would’ve been able to completely wipe away the Moulan spell warriors, but that would’ve resulted in a huge loss in strength. With the Soaring Tribes soon to come, we would’ve been completely powerless to resist them.”

Many of the cultivators who hadn’t known Han Li had both dealt with the refined corpses and the azure Sacred Bird couldn’t help but glance at him in astonishment. Han Li calmly turned a blind eye to their gazes.

Wei Wuya gloomily snorted and coldly said, “The Moulan wanted to seize our domain. How can there be talks for peace? Don’t tell me we’re truly giving them half of our land?”

Long Han said, “That is absolutely out of the question! However, we can hand over two countries that border the Moulan Plains over to them. As such, the Moulan will bear the brunt of the

assault from the Soaring Tribes. Since they are mortal enemies, there is no chance of betrayal from the Moulan. Of course, given how powerful the Soaring Tribes are, we will have to cooperate with the Moulan in fighting with them.”

In the blink of an eye, these two irreconcilable enemies turned into allies. However, there were no objections raised amongst these ancient, well-experienced eccentrics.

“That territory belongs to our Nine Nations Union? Are we to hand it over?” Wei Wuya’s expression grew unsightly.

Long Han explained, “There is nothing that can be done about it. Those areas are the closest to the Moulan Plains. Of course, we won’t allow you to accept this loss alone. After some talks, we’ll be sure to compensate your union.”

“Then let’s leave that matter for later. We’ll have to see what the Moulan think first.” Wu Wuya was clearly satisfied with the matter, but he pushed the matter behind regardless.

Han Li then turned his gaze to Master Sunreach and Devil Concord. They appeared to be pondering about the matter, but it seemed they’ve already decided. It was only on behalf of Wei Wuya’s face that they didn’t immediately agree. Han Li sighed. It seemed each power has returned to plotting against each other for their own advantage.

When Long Han heard Wei Wuya, he didn’t reveal the slightest surprise. Rather, he smiled and said, “This was something I had said without consideration. Of course, we will have a proper discussion on how we specifically deal with them, but before we start negotiations, we must immediately send men to the Moulan Plains and investigate whether the Soaring Tribes invasion is true. If it is, the Moulan will not be able to continue fighting us and we will both have to make concessions. Otherwise, the Soaring Tribes will sweep us both away.”

The cultivators felt much more at ease with this explanation.

Even Wei Wuya's expression relaxed as the discussion was carried out.

During this time, Han Li kept silent. Since he had nothing to contribute, he saved his breath. If matters didn't involve the Drifting Cloud Sect or himself, he was felt disinclined to put in any effort. And with Long Han there, he reckoned the Heavenly Dao Union won't suffer a great loss.

Not long after, the eccentrics had finished discussion their plans and contingencies. Afterwards, they dispelled the restrictions surrounding them and the Three Great Cultivators began to have a quick word about something else. Eventually, the Moulan and the Heavenly South cultivators both sent a few men to discuss the terms of the temporary ceasefire. As for the other matters, that would only be discussed in the coming days.

The Moulan Sages all wore a gloomy expression. With their way back blocked off and their home gone, the spell warriors felt at a complete loss. Their morale had dropped to complete low.

Han Li and the other cultivators watched the Moulan armies withdraw and slowly evacuate towards Skyfirst City. The battle at the border between hundreds of thousands of Immortal cultivators have come to an end.

...

Several months later, in a seemingly endless barren mountain range, a streak of azure light quickly flashed through it at the speed of lightning. A silhouette could be faintly seen from within the light. He wore scholarly robes and had a common appearance. He was Han Li who was returning to the Drifting Cloud Sect.

In the time since the border battle had ended, startling information that the Soaring Tribes were intending to take advantage of their weakened state had spread, forcing the Moulan and the Heavenly South to come to a reluctant ceasefire.

By the time Eccentric Heavenvenge returned to Skyfirst City and confirmed that there was another power attacking the Moulan, the many factions send several waves of their own cultivators to sweep the Moulan Plains, discovering that the Moulan mortals had been pushed to the border of the plains. As for the original residence of the Moulan Tribes, they have begun showing traces of the Soaring Tribes.

As a result, the Heavenly South could no longer delay and began to negotiate with the Moulan with great intensity.

At the start, the Moulan wished for a third of the Heavenly South continent, or they would risk extermination for the Heavenly South and restart the war. For a time, neither side could move the discussion. But soon after, the Moulan mortals began to gather at the edge of the plains and the Soaring Tribes began to openly pursue Moulan spell warriors. As a result, the Divine Sages could only gradually concede.

After all, the Moulan were now on the verge of extinction and they were able to have discussions with the Heavenly South cultivators, unlike the Soaring Tribes who they held several tens of thousands of years of mutual hatred with.

With several rounds of discussion, they eventually reached an agreement to give two countries to the Moulan and move the native mortals to other countries. Then, each of the three powers carved out a portion of their own territories to compensate the Nine Nations Union, housing the clans and sects that were displaced.

In return, the Moulan had to resist the Soaring Tribes invasion with all their might, in accordance to what the Heavenly South powers had planned. Of course, the Heavenly South powers did provide assistance to resist the Soaring Tribes together.

As a result, although the Moulan acquired their own land to live on, they bore the same responsibility at the Nine Nations once did,

they were required to stand on guard for any attacks by the Soaring Tribes. And because they were only given two countries, the Heavenly South powers didn't need to worry about the Moulan expanding and becoming a threat later on. After all, one's potential power is limited to the number of cultivation resources one possesses.

While the Moulan were confined to two countries, they managed to avoid extermination, and they wouldn't have to fight the Soaring Tribes alone. They would have the assistance of the Heavenly South factions. Under the current circumstances, both parties were satisfied with this agreement.

But among this, there was something that occurred to Han Li. Since he had killed the Dao Companion of the Yin Sifting Sect Master, the sect master was unwilling to leave it be and sent him many challenges to fight him alone. However, whenever Han Li received these messages, he immediately extinguished them without any intention of replying to them.

It wasn't reasonable to expect that an early Nascent Soul-stage cultivator to fight a late Nascent Soul-stage cultivator, and Han Li wasn't the reckless hot-blooded sort either. He wouldn't do something so stupid without reason.

Once discussions were finished between the Moulan and the Heavenly South, the Yin Sifting Sect Master seemed to have come to an agreement with the Moulan Divine Sages and he immediately departed with his subordinates. It was reportedly said that he returned to the Jin Empire, much to the relief of Han Li.

As for the ancient lantern that Han Li captured, it was the legacy treasure of the Moulan Tribes, the Bright Origin Lantern. The Moulan Divine Sages have all expressed that the Bright Origin Lantern was something passed down to the Moulan through successive generations. As it wasn't something that should fall into the hands of outsiders, they immediately called for its return.

Of course, Han Li wasn't about to refuse them or let this opportunity pass. He immediately demanded several chunks of Auric Essence in exchange, but it was a pity that the Moulan didn't possess much of it. They were only able to come up with what amounted to a small piece. As a result, Han Li reluctantly accepted other rare materials to compensate and returned the ancient lantern.

Han Li didn't truly wish to hold onto the lantern. While its abilities were truly profound, it would one day come to haunt him. If decided to keep it, there would come a day where the Moulan would conspire to acquire it back. As such, it was better to be rid of it.

# Chapter 784: Nangong Involved

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On his way back to the Drifting Cloud Sect, Han Li glanced at the storage pouch at his waist. When Han Li returned the ancient lantern in exchange for the rare materials, the Moulan had returned the flower basket ancient treasure and the Purple Cloudlace without any prior discussion.

It seemed the Moulan clearly understood that if they were to stay in the Heavenly South for long, they couldn't afford to offend their high-grade cultivators. As such, the ancient treasures were returned to him so that there would be no grudges between them. Since Han Li had shown immense power at his young age, even the Moulan Divine Sages viewed him with dread.

With the ancient treasures returned, Han Li promptly gave the Purple Cloudlace back to Silvermoon. Although she only made use of the treasure while she was in her demon fox body, she had used it to great effect. Since Han Li wasn't the ungrateful sort, he gave the Purple Cloudlace over to her as a reward.

When news spread out that the Heavenly South cultivators and the Moulan had joined hands, the Soaring Tribes grew hesitant for a time. Although they stationed a large number of cultivators at the border of the Moulan Plains, they didn't immediately launch an attack. They merely observed the actions of the Heavenly South and the Moulan, deciding to only observe in the near future.

However, the Soaring Tribe's actions only caused for greater concern to Master Sunreach and the other leading figures of the Heavenly South. The deliberation of their enemies only displayed a greater intent to invade the Heavenly South Continent.

Seeing that there would be quite some time before further confrontation, the various powers of the Heavenly South took turns guarding the border as they did before. Each sect would send a few of their elite disciples and garrison them near the two

countries given to the Moulan.

If the Soaring Tribes did attack, the Moulan would be hard pressed and the stationed disciples would be able to provide immediate assistance. As for the other cultivators, they were allowed to return to their sects.

As a Drifting Cloud Sect Elder, Han Li had much to do with Senior Martial Brother Lu. After confirming that most of the sect disciples had survived, he was free to return to the sect. Lu Luo had a few other matters to deal with and had to stay behind for a few days. As such, Han Li returned first.

On the way, Han Li used the Wind Riding Chariot to hasten his journey, allowing him to cut down on the time it took to travel back. But when he entered the State of Xi, Han Li put the chariot away to avoid any unnecessary attention.

The remaining hundred kilometers were traveled in nearly the blink of an eye. When he saw the Dreamcloud Mountains in the distance, he couldn't help but smile as he thought of Nangong Wan's beautiful appearance.

Soon, Han Li found himself inside a secret room, glaring at a silver-haired old man, his Senior Martial Brother Cheng. With a face filled with fury and malevolence, Han Li uttered, "What's going on?"

When he had returned to the Drifting Cloud Sect, he didn't immediately return to his cave residence. Rather, he was stopped halfway and was brought to a secret room brimming with glacial energy. It was there that Han Li saw an astonishing sight.

Nangong Wan had transformed into a seven-year-old child, sealed inside a slab of ice. Her eyes were shut as if completely oblivious to her surroundings, much to the fury and alarm of Han Li.

Senior Martial Brother Cheng bitterly smiled and sighed. "If

Junior Martial Brother Han had returned two weeks earlier, he might've been able to prevent this from happening. There is no danger to her life for now, but she is forced to use this method to delay the activation of the Soul Seal Curse."

"The Soul Seal Curse? How did this Yin curse take effect? Wasn't this curse lost long ago in the Heavenly South? Could it be..." Han Li paused to a moment when something soon came to mind.

Seeing that Han Li recalled something, Senior Martial Brother Cheng gave Han Li a detailed explanation of what happened to her.

Half a month ago, Nangong Wan emerged from her cave residence in the morning to absorb the frost of a nearby mountain for the use of her incarnation arts, but she didn't expect to encounter a black-robed man on her outing.

As soon as this man saw Nangong Wan, he immediately attacked her with a ferocious Devil Dao technique, breaking through several of her protective treasures. When Nangong Wan saw this, she hastily called for help and attempted to escape in the direction of her cave residence. By the time Senior Martial Brother Cheng and other Drifting Cloud Sect disciples went to assist her, she had already fallen into the black-robed man's grasp. He simply pressed his finger against her forehead and soon released her.

In his alarm, Senior Martial Brother Cheng immediately ordered his disciples to jointly attack the black-robed man, but when the black-robed man saw so many Drifting Cloud Sect disciples present, he didn't make an attempt to fight them. With a cold smile, he left a jade slip behind and flew away at the speed of lightning.

Unable to do anything to him, Senior Martial Brother Cheng brought Nangong Wan back to the sect in an attempt to heal her, only to discover that she had suffered from the Soul Seal Curse — a secret restriction that was long lost to the Heavenly South Devil Dao.

When the restriction is forcefully placed on a person, their intellect and spirit are slowly sealed. Then depending on the target's cultivation, their soul is slowly destroyed after an unknown amount of time, turning the target into a living corpse. It was once an extremely malicious method to deal with an enemy.

The old man was extremely frightened by the sight of this curse and was at a complete loss of what to do. But at that moment, Nangong Wan had managed to awaken on her own. After learning that she suffered from the Soul Seal Curse, she paled and immediately thought of a method to save her own life.

She decided to use an ability of her Greater Incarnation Arts and temporarily seal herself using glacial Qi. As a result, not only would this completely seal Nangong Wan's body, but it would also slow down the effects of the curse to a vast degree. The result is how you see her currently." Once that was said, he handed over an azure and a red jade slip over to Han Li.

Senior Martial Brother Cheng sighed and said, "One of the jade slips was left behind for Junior Martial Sister Nangong by the black-robed man. As for the other piece, it was something he had left behind for Junior Martial Brother Han in particular. Please take a look at them."

Han Li sullenly received the two jade slips and examined them before deciding to first read through the jade slip meant for Nangong Wan. After immersing his spiritual sense into the jade slip, he wore a strange expression. Although he appeared somewhat worried, he appeared to be grateful as well.

This had stunned Senior Martial Brother Cheng. The jade slip was left behind by Nangong Wan for Han Li. The old man hadn't read through this jade slip as there had been a small trick placed on it, allowing others to know if someone else had read through it first. Since it was easily seen through, the old man wouldn't rashly make such a mistake. Due to Han Li's recent rise in reputation and display of might, he couldn't afford to treat him lightly.

After Han Li finished reading through the azure jade slip, Han Li sighed and moved to the crimson jade slip.

Once he read through it, Han Li's expression sank and he twisted his hands in fury, immolating the jade slips in purple flames.

The old man was astonished by the sight. Although these jade slips weren't meticulously refined, it was rather difficult to burn them without leaving even ash behind. Since Han Li was able to do this without much effort, it only validated many of the rumors of Han Li that claimed his own power was greater than that of a mid-Nascent Soul cultivator. He had found a rather formidable character on behalf of the Drifting Cloud Sect.

As the old man thoughts appeared in his head, Han Li muttered to himself and asked, "Senior Martial Brother Cheng, did you catch the face of the person who ambushed Nangong Wan? Was he tall? And what was his cultivation? Perhaps he is someone that I know."

The old man promptly replied, "I did manage to catch sight of him and he was quite tall. He was a youth with an ordinary face. He seemed to be using some sort of concealment technique to hide. My abilities were too poor to see through them. However, he should be at mid-Nascent Soul stage at the very least as he was able to easily defeat Fellow Daoist Nangong."

"A youth?" Han Li's expression flickered. He felt it surprising.

"That's right! However, with his cultivation, he is certain to be like Junior Martial Brother. He must've taken some sort of medicine pill or cultivated some technique to halt his appearance. However, his age is also certain to be larger than your own. There are sparsely few cultivators in this world that are able to condense a Nascent Soul at your age. But Junior Martial Brother, from what I saw of the jade slip that the black-robed man left behind, he wishes for Junior Martial Brother to bring your magic treasure refined from Golden Lightning Bamboo to the Profound Heaven Mountains. Could it be this person is truly a Devil Dao cultivator

from the Jin Empire? Do you truly possess a precious treasure refined from Golden Lightning Bamboo?” The old man was unable to hold his questions back.

“I can’t be certain whether or not it is that person, but regardless, he has a relationship with me. He should be a devil cultivator from the Jin Empire’s Yin Sifting Sect. I originally believed that they wished to take vengeance on me for killing one of their sect members, but I didn’t expect for them to desire my Golden Lightning Bamboo treasure. It seemed they wished to pay me a visit even if I didn’t kill their sect member. As a result, Wan’er was involved. It is true that I possess a treasure refined from Golden Lightning Bamboo.” Once that was said, the anger from his face slipped away, only to be replaced with a harsh coldness.

“This comes as no surprise. Golden Lightning Bamboo is legendary for its ability to restrain devilish arts. And since they’re from the Jin Empire, they don’t have to show any restraint in dealing with cultivators from the Heavenly South. How about this? I’ll invite some of my close friends to join together and find that man.”

# Chapter 785: Sword Refinement

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Han Li shook his head and slowly said, “There is no need. If I’ve guessed correctly, his cultivation will be profound, and he’ll be a character on par with the Moulan Divine Sages. If common cultivators encountered him, they wouldn’t be able to deal with him and they would only bring about their own deaths. Besides, he possesses the Soul Seal Curse’s removal method. I don’t want to scare him off.”

Senior Martial Brother Cheng shouted in alarm, “On par with a Moulan Divine Sage! Could he be a late Nascent Soul-stage cultivator? If that’s the case, Junior Martial Brother definitely can’t take him on alone. It will be too dangerous, so let’s request some help from Long Han and Feng Bing.”

With a deep sigh, Han Li calmly said, “Although they will be able to deal with this person, they will need at least four months to arrive; it will be too late. The black-robed man is only giving two months of time past the assault. It seems he’s calculated when I would return, but he didn’t anticipate that I could travel so quickly. This will give me some time to consider how to properly deal with him!”

Most importantly, I will need to find out how to acquire the method to dissolve the Soul Seal Curse.”

Senior Martial Brother Cheng could only nod in agreement. “Alright, if Junior Martial Brother needs any assistance, please don’t hesitate to ask. The sect’s disciples are at your disposal.”

“Many thanks, Senior Martial Brother. According to the jade slip Wan’er left behind, she is able to postpone the activation of the Soul Seal Curse for nearly a hundred years, but in truth, this had never been tested before, so I can’t help but worry!” Han Li glanced at the girl in the wall of ice with worry.

After a moment of thought, the old man consoled, “There is no

need for Junior Martial Brother to be so anxious. From what I see, she should be able to survive and pass this trial. How about this? In the next few days, I'll go and look through a few ancient records and see if there are any methods of dissolving the curse, resolving any need to go seek out the black-robed man."

Han Li forced a smile and said, "Thank you for the trouble, Senior Martial Brother. If you have no objections, I wish to be alone here for a while. I hope you don't take offense."

"Of course, of course. I'll be heading to the records library now. Please keep your wife company." Senior Martial Brother Cheng responded with a tone of empathy and he promptly left, leaving Han Li alone in the room.

Han Li then turned his attention to the ice wall, his face wearing a lonely expression as he let out a long sigh.

After an entire day, Han Li had yet to leave the room.

When Senior Martial Brother Cheng returned from the records library and saw that Han Li still remained inside, he couldn't help but worry. After half a day more, he felt the need to check up on him. But just as he thought to enter, Han Li suddenly emerged from the room.

"Junior Martial Brother Han, has anything happened?" The old man asked with bewilderment.

Han Li's heart warmed, seeing the old man was waiting for him outside the door. He apologetically said, "It's nothing. I was only thinking of my plans on how I should deal with the enemy. Sorry for making you worry. There is still a month left before the deadline. I must prepare to enter seclusion. You won't need to bother me if there isn't anything important."

"You're going to enter seclusion? What can you do in such a short amount of time?" Senior Martial Brother Cheng appeared baffled.

Han Li vaguely replied, “I’ve acquired a bit of Auric Essence since I’ve been gone. I was prepared to further temper my magic treasures, but in such a short amount of time, I’ll only be able to strengthen them somewhat.”

The old man suddenly came to an understanding and said, “So it was like that. Please go ahead Junior Martial Brother. I’ll make sure none of the sect disciples will bother you.”

Han Li solemnly added on. “There is still something else. Since the ice wall is formed here, I cannot stray too far. Otherwise, something could happen to it. However, I can place several more spell formations to surround it and better protect Wan’er. I will have to trouble Senior Martial Brother to attend to it.”

“Please don’t worry, Junior Martial Brother. Fellow Daoist Nangong was attacked while within the domain of our Drifting Cloud Sect, and as such, I bear the responsibility. I’ve already had this place classified as a forbidden area. There will be no disciples wandering over here. There will be no problem with your wife’s safety.” The silver-haired old man replied instantly as if having already considered the problem.

A bright glint flashed through Han Li’s eyes. “Since that’s the case, I am relieved. With no time to lose, I’ll first place down the spell formations before entering seclusion.”

Leaving the old man behind, he returned to his cave residence, surprised to see that Mu Peiling was waiting for him there. A trace of astonishment flickered from his eyes but he still welcomed her inside.

Once Mu Peiling entered the hall, she worriedly asked, “Is Big Sister Nanlong alright? I heard that she was wounded, but I didn’t receive any precise information. I’ve been worried.”

Han Li took a seat and calmly asked, “Huh? You have a good relationship with Wan’er?”

Mu Peiling promptly replied, “We get along well. Big Sister Nanlong’s temperament is quite good. While my Lord was away, she gave me much guidance with my cultivation. I am indebted to her.”

After a moment of silence, he wore a bitter smile. “I should be happy from what you said. However, Wan’er has suffered from the Soul Seal Curse and has sealed herself, so I can take joy in what you said. But in the several months I haven’t seen you, your cultivation has clearly risen. I am pleased that you haven’t been slacking in your cultivation. As for me, I will have to spend the next month in seclusion, making preparations to dissolve Wan’er’s curse.”

Mu Peiling couldn’t help but ask, “Soul Seal Curse? That Devil Dao curse will be troublesome. My Lord, do you have a way to solve it?”

A harsh expression suddenly appearing on his face, Han Li gloomily said, “Solve it? I can only defeat the person who placed down the curse and acquire the method to dissolve it from his felled body.”

When Mu Peiling heard this, she could only frown.

At that moment, the disciple who Han Li had picked up out of convenient, Liu Yu, came to visit him. In addition to sending her regards to her master, she also came to ask about Nangong Wan. As a clever person, she had befriended Nangong Wan, her master’s wife.

When she arrived, Han Li gave her a short summary of what had happened, including to mention the Soul Seal Curse. This had worried Liu Yu, but given her lacking experience and cultivation, there was nothing she could do.

With no intention of continuing to chat with the two women, Han Li escorted them out. Naturally, the two didn’t raise any

objections and obediently left.

But just as the two left the cave residence, Liu Yu eyes flickered and she smiled at Mu Peiling. “Fellow Daoist Mu, while you are the Master’s concubine, it seems that you are still a maiden and are treated only as a guest. Could it be that your beauty doesn’t move him? Or is there some other reason? With Lady Nangong’s beauty being above yours, you had better shape up.”

“You mean...” Mu Peiling blushed as soon as she realized what Liu Yu meant. Then with a smile, Liu Yu shot into the sky in a streak of light. After blankly standing in place for a moment, she immediately flew off on her magic tool.

When Han Li saw the two women depart, he checked the medicine garden and the insect room to see they were all doing fine. Then after bringing a few tool refinement materials into a sealed room, he began to use Nascent flame to temper the Auric Essence into his thirty-six flying swords.

In addition to the pieces of Auric Essence he had acquired from Master Sunreach and the Moulan, he was given another piece of Auric Essence from Long Han on behalf of the Heavenly Dao alliance. As a result, he had more than enough Auric Essence to fully temper his thirty-six flying swords.

Tempering additional materials into completed magic treasures wasn’t a complicated task. However, it was rather pressing to do this is only in a month. Han Li could only sit down and do his utmost to temper his swords until they could form a minor version of the Grand Aureate Sword Formation, allowing him to battle against a late Nascent Soul-stage cultivator.

As for the person who placed the Soul Seal Curse on Nangong Wan, he should most likely be the Yin Sifting Sect Master. He needed to acquire the method of dissolving the curse, and the minor form of the Aureate Sword Formation would be his way of getting it.

With those thoughts in mind, Han Li placed his hand against his storage pouch and summoned several various-sized pieces of Auric Essence on the ground. He then summoned the supplementary materials from his storage pouch by their side.

Han Li sat down cross-legged and pointed to the smallest piece of Auric Essence. The faintly golden stone floated in the air and slowly flew towards Han Li.

Han Li stared at it unwaveringly and waited until it was a meter in front of him before it stopped. Then with his hands held in an incantation gesture, he spat out a dazzling azure Nascent flame.

With a light bang, it struck the Auric Essence and instantly enveloped it.

Han Li slowly began his incantation and the azure Nascent flame suddenly flared, glowing ever brighter, slowly melting the stone inside. He stared at it with a stern expression.

After an hour had passed, a majority of the impurities dripped onto the floor as quite liquid. The rest of the Auric Essence remained in the fire as a translucent liquid. Once Han Li saw this, he flung his sleeve and swept up a jade box from the ground. It instantly opened itself to reveal a fine silver powder.

The powder was then swept into the liquid auric essence in a streak of silver light, roiling the azure flames. The transparent liquid then began to shine with silver light, and after striking it with several spell seals, it was entirely absorbed.

# Chapter 786: Sword Formation - Minor Completion

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Suddenly, a strange scene occurred as the transparent liquid began to split into six thumb-sized silver beads that slowly swiveled in the air.

Han Li let out a deep breath before suddenly biting the tip of his tongue and spitting a cloud of blood essence onto the beads. They cleanly absorbed the entirety of the blood essence, turn them into pure gold.

His spirits were roused at the sight and he spat out a streak of azure light. The light circled once around him before stopping, revealing itself to be a sparkling inch-long sword surrounded by azure mist.

Han Li pointed to one of the purified beads of Auric Essence and had it cover the surface of the sword in a perfectly even layer. The small sword immediately began to flicker with a dazzling golden light.

Han Li raised his brow at this and pointed at the ground several times, summoning several of the supplementary materials to fuse with the flying sword. He then beckoned to the flying sword and it instantly flew into his palm where it became embroiled in azure Nascent flames.

Han Li slowly shut his eyes and used his spiritual sense to control the Nascent flames and begin the tempering. This process would only be completed when the blood essence infused Auric Essence merged completely with the flying sword.

Day after day passed, and Han Li refined each of the Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords without a single moment of rest. Were it not for the Myriad Year Spirit Milk, Han Li's magic power wouldn't have been able to persist.

As time drew closer to the black-robed man's appointed date, those who knew of the matter grew anxious but the most worried of them all was Senior Martial Brother Cheng. On the day before the deadline, someone delivered a jade slip to the Drifting Cloud Sect using a flying sword. The jade slip detailed the precise location for the coming appointment.

Not only was the terrain dangerous, but it was even somewhat far from the Dreamcloud Mountains. If Han Li did not leave seclusion soon, he may not have enough time to make it there.

As the silver-haired old man restlessly walked in circles inside the official hall, Han Li silently appeared at the entrance. The old man saw that Han Li arrived and shouted with delight, "Junior Martial Brother, you've finally arrived! Have you finished tempering your magic treasures?"

Appearing more confident than he was a month ago, Han Li sullenly responded, "I've managed to somehow finish refining the treasures. Senior Martial Brother, I heard that another jade slip has been sent explaining the meeting place. Is that true?"

"That's right. He wishes to meet you at the peak of Heavencolumn Mountain. Here's the jade slip that he sent." Senior Martial Brother Cheng nodded and handed over a green jade slip.

Han Li took it and quickly read through it with his spiritual sense.

With a snort, a stern expression appeared on his face as he said, "He wants me to come alone and bring the Golden Lightning Bamboo magic treasure. It seems he's investigated me quite well. He even knew of my relationship with Wan'er, or else he wouldn't have been able to use it against me."

"With his vast abilities, it should prove to be an easy task to stealthily look into the matters between Junior Martial Brother Han and Little Sister Nangong. After all, low-grade cultivators are completely helpless against powerful Devil Dao cultivators. Junior

Martial Brother, I can't have you face this danger alone so I've already contacted the Child Fire Dragon and six other Fellow Daoists. When you take off, we'll follow closely behind you. As soon as that person appears, we'll surround him and will be certain to keep him trapped. We'll make sure he knows that he can't do as he wishes in our State of Xi." Senior Martial Brother Cheng declared with a resentful tone.

"Senior Martial Brother's methods are quite good, but this man will most likely be on guard. However, it's fine if Senior Martial Brother and his companions follow me. If he is careless and arrogant, it will spell his death." After a moment of thought, Han Li agreed. Help was exactly what he was looking for.

"Good, it's settled. Although Heavencollar Mountain is extremely tall, it may as well be flat to cultivators like us. I will put a marker on your body and we will use that to follow you. If the opponent truly isn't someone you can fight, you only need to buy some time for me and my friends to arrive."

"I must thank Senior Martial Brother for his troubles, and I will be sure to return the favor." As Han Li seldom accepted help from others, he spoke these words with complete sincerity.

Senior Martial Brother Cheng smiled and chuckled as he said, "Junior Martial Brother Han is part of our Drifting Cloud Sect so we can't treat you as an outsider. The arranged time is soon to come. You must hurry with your preparations and leave tonight, or you might not have enough time to arrive at Heavencollar Mountain."

Han Li nodded in agreement and quickly departed.

Senior Martial Brother Cheng sighed with relief after Han Li departed and wore a knowing smile. From Han Li's promise of paying back this favor, he knew that his efforts had not been in vain. Once he reached the end of his lifespan, he knew that his Junior Martial Brother Han would do his best to repay the Drifting

## Cloud Sect.

Tension leaving the old man's heart, he slapped his storage pouch after a moment more of thought and took out several talismans. He then flung them in the air before they flew out of the hall in streaks of red light. After doing this, the silver-haired old man sat in his chair with a pensive expression and pondered over what had just happened.

These sound transmission talismans would soon summon his good friends who had been staying at the sect's guest hall over the past few days. Two hours after Han Li departed, Senior Martial Brother Cheng and them set off after him.

In order to preserve his magic power, Han Li only flew in an ordinary streak of light and while flew he fiddled with the three-inch-long sword in his hand. It was one of the thirty-six swords that Han Li had infused with Auric Essence.

For some unknown reason, the flying swords had turned gold after being infused with Auric Essence. If he guessed correctly, the change in appearance was only temporary; once the Auric Essence had truly merged into the magic treasure, it's original appearance would be restored. But when he saw that the thirty-six swords still retained their golden luster after fully refining them, he felt completely baffled.

However, the effect the Auric Essence had on the swords appeared to be even greater than the legends had described. From his tests, the flying swords were at least thirty percent more powerful and their sharpness far surpassed what they had before. Han Li was confident that if they clashed with any magic treasures that were made from inferior materials, his flyings swords would likely cleave through them.

However, there were some misgivings that accompanied his delight. He eventually recalled the main material of the flying swords, the Golden Lightning Bamboo, and the refined crystal that

he had used to first temper them. Could it be that when these incredibly rare materials merged with the Auric Essence, they underwent some sort of unfathomable evolution? After some long thought, he found this to be the only explanation.

Since this change was for the better, he wasn't willing to spend too much effort investigating the matter. Instead, he placed his mind on the Aureate Sword Formation. Han Li didn't need to specifically cultivate it in order to use it. In fact, he had easily activated it while in seclusion to test its power.

The sword formation's amazing power served to verify the words of the golden page. Although he was only able to form a simple version of the Aureate Formation, it already displayed a marvelous power that bolstered Han Li's confidence in facing the black-robed man.

He needed to dispel Nangong Wan's Soul Seal Curse, but if he didn't possess the Aureate Formation, Han Li definitely wouldn't have obediently sent himself off to death.

Of course, Han Li hadn't ever fought against a late Nascent Soul-stage cultivator and he couldn't truly know how well he would do. But he had fought against mid Nascent Soul-stage cultivators, and reckoned he would have at least an eighty percent chance of trapping and killing one. With such power, he should have more than enough ability to contend against a late-Nascent Soul cultivator.

However, it would prove rather troublesome to acquire the method of dissolving the Soul Seal Curse from his opponent. Han Li will need to use his own discretion once he met the black-robed man and carefully navigate the situation.

Han Li sighed and the small sword in his hand disappeared from his sight. He then swept his surroundings with his spiritual sense, discovering no trace of his Senior Martial Brother or his allies but wasn't surprised. They were sure to be hiding in the distance from

fear that the black-robed man would discover them since their opponent was possibly a late Nascent Soul cultivator.

Heavenpillar Mountain was an isolated, steep mountain tens of kilometers tall located to the west of the Dreamcloud Mountains.

From a distance, it appeared extremely steep with a third of the mountain reaching beyond the clouds. There were only a few short hills surrounding the mountain, allowing the surroundings to be clearly seen from the center of the mountain. This was also probably why the black-robed man had selected it.

But when Han Li arrived fifty kilometers away from the mountain, he suddenly felt his spiritual sense roil. While his spiritual sense was at the level of a mid Nascent Soul-stage cultivator, he didn't dare to let down his guard. Who didn't know whether or not the black-robed man was deliberately hiding something in order to lull him into a false sense of security.

As a result, Han Li simply had his spiritual sense probe his surroundings while feigning ignorance about being watched as he flew towards the peak of the mountain. At nearly the same time, a black-robed man sitting on the peak opened his eyes and stared in the direction of Han Li.

He muttered, "You've come. It seems the information I acquired was correct, and your relationship with that woman is quite deep."

# Chapter 787: A Black-Robed Youth

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“Putting yourself in danger over a woman? It seems I’ve overestimated you.” The black-robed man muttered to himself and turned to look at the simple transportation formation next to him.

When he sensed that Han Li was only a few tens of kilometers away, he stood up and walked towards the transportation formation in large strides. A moment later, he disappeared in a flash of white light.

At that moment, Han Li felt the black-robed man suddenly disappear. Alarm ringing through his head, he thought, “What use is there in using a concealment technique? Is he plotting against me?” He then continued onward with complete vigilance.

“This is...” When Han Li arrived at the top of Heavencollar Mountain and saw the eye-catching transportation formation placed there, his expression changed. His gaze then turned to the boulder at its side, which had the words, “Do not be late,” carved into it.

When Han Li read these words, his expression grew unsightly and he cursed his enemy’s cunning.

Although he was able to see that it was a simple transportation formation that couldn’t travel far away, if he took it he would fall right into the enemy’s trap. Even worse was that he couldn’t know whether or not Senior Martial Brother Cheng’s party would follow him.

From what was carved in the stone, it was clear to see that the black-robed man wasn’t willing to meet with him and give him the opportunity to negotiate. If Han Li delayed for too long, the black-robed man may decide to leave and he couldn’t afford to take that risk.

If Han Li wanted to find the method to dissolve the Soul Seal

Curse, he could only take the risk of using the formation.

Han Li's expression wavered for a time, before he eventually came to a decision. He first swept the nearby area to see whether or not there were any devil cultivators hiding nearby. Then, he took out a sound transmission talisman and whispered into it before tossing it into the air, launching it through the sky in a streak of red light.

Afterwards, Han Li took the spirit beast pouch from his waist and summoned its contents into the air. Black-tainted Gold Devouring Beetles that just appeared then swarmed around him and transformed into a tri-colored suit of armor covering his body.

With a fling of his sleeve, he summoned a small blue shield in front of him and in a flash of white light, an embroidered scarf appeared in his hand.

Han Li lowered his head to look at the embroidered scarf and a strange expression appeared in his eyes. The embroidered scarf was a protective treasure that Nangong Wan had given him, and he stroked its smooth cloth as he silently stood there.

A moment later, Han Li raised his hand and placed several protective barriers on his body before finally stepping into the transportation formation. He then took a deep breathe and raised his hands, striking at the corner of the formation with a spell seal. White light flashed and Han Li disappeared without a trace.

At the center of a nameless island in a small lake several thousand kilometers away from Heavencolumn Mountain, Han Li appeared in a flash of white light.

In the moment he arrived, he disregarded the discomfort from the teleportation and ordered his blue shield to enlarge and cover him, protecting a majority of his body. However, Han Li didn't detect any attack and had the time to glance around him instead.

"There is no need to worry. I wouldn't go so far as to launch a

sneak attack against an early Nascent Soul cultivator like you, although I do hear that you are a rather extraordinary cultivator.” A strange voice spoke from close to him.

When Han Li heard this voice, his heart trembled. This wasn’t the voice of the Yin Sifting Sect Master. Could it be that this was another Devil cultivator? Astonishment on his face, he turned to look in the direction of the voice.

He saw a black-robed youth that looked to be in his twenties standing a hundred meters away with his hands behind his back, staring at Han Li. Although Han Li hadn’t seen the true face of the Yin Sifting Sect Master, this man’s body and voice were completely different from what he had seen.

Han Li looked at him, unable to see through his cultivation. With narrowed eyes and a wary heart, he snorted and mockingly said, “If you won’t perform a sneak attack, then why did you need to place the Soul Seal Curse on my Dao Companion?”

After saying these words, Han Li took in his surroundings. He was at the edge of a swamp with muddied waters and damp air. He could hear the sounds of a lake and see a short grove close to them.

Han Li frowned for a moment before regaining a calm expression. He felt that there were strange spiritual Qi fluctuations around him and realized there were restrictions placed around them as he had expected. Although he reckoned they weren’t formidable spell formations, they were certain to put him at a disadvantage considering that he was forced here.

The youth chuckled and leisurely said, “I won’t be needing to use them since Fellow Daoist Han has obediently come. Although I possess some abilities, it isn’t to the extent that I would be able to resist your entire sect.”

Han Li glared at the youth and asked, “You truly aren’t the Yin Sifting Sect Master?”

“What? Do I look like my sect master?” Asked the black-robed youth with a chuckle.

“No. But you were able to easily sneak into the Drifting Cloud Sect and safely leave after injuring someone. I don’t know who else aside from your sect master who could’ve done it. Also, I don’t recall ever seeing you before; did you not appear during the great battle?” Puzzled, Han Li spoke as if musing to himself.

The youth smiled and wore an odd expression as he said, “Although I do wish to give Fellow Daoist Han an explanation, I did not invite you here to explain myself. Did you bring the Golden Lightning Bamboo magic treasure?”

When Han Li heard this, he glared at the youth in silence.

The youth sighed and confidently said, “If Fellow Daoist Han wishes to drag this on, I fear he will be disappointed. I specifically refined the transportation formation so that it will only work twice. After two uses, the other end of the transportation formation will destroy itself and your friends wouldn’t be able to get here in less than half a day. I believe that will be more than enough time to settle the matter between us.”

A cold glint appeared in Han Li’s eyes and he snorted, speaking with an emotionless tone, “You wish to know whether or not I have the Golden Lightning Bamboo treasure on hand, but how about telling me the method to dissolve the Soul Seal Curse first?”

“The method to dissolve the Soul Seal Curse is inside this jade slip, but let me take a look at the Golden Lightning Bamboo treasure first. I am not like my sect master, and I only want the Golden Lightning Bamboo. I have no intention of trying to avenge his dead Dao Companion.” The youth’s smile disappeared and he revealed a jet-black jade slip in his hand then deeply stared at Han Li.

With raised brows, Han Li firmly said, “Of course. Although the Golden Lightning Bamboo treasure is valuable, it isn’t nearly as

important as my own Dao companion.” He placed his hands on his chest and then slowly drew them away. In a clap of thunder, golden lightning jumped out as a small azure arrow appeared in his hand. Holding it with two fingers, Han Li expressionlessly glanced at the youth.

When the youth saw this, greed momentarily appeared on his face. Then after a moment of thought, he flicked his wrist and sent the black jade slip flying towards Han Li at an incredibly slow speed as if it were being dragged through the air by a rope.

Han Li immediately understood what he intended. Without speaking another word he flung the small arrow over, making it travel through the air at a similar speed.

Although the two were controlling each of the items, their gazes were fixed on each other’s faces. By the time the two objects arrived in front of each other, Han Li and the youth both let out sighs of relief. The two took the exchanged items into their hands and quickly looked them over, only to find themselves wearing a bitter smile.

“This is your Golden Lightning Bamboo magic treasure?” The black-robed youth coldly smiled and pinched the small azure arrow in his hand. In a silver-white fire, it turned into ash.

“I’ve also never heard that the simplest of the five elements techniques was capable of dissolving the Soul Seal Curse.” Han Li grasped the jade slip in his hand and burned it with blue flame, causing it to freeze and shatter into glistening light.

The black-robed youth wore a stern expression and he snorted as traces of fiendish Qi began to emerge from his body. “It seems neither of us trusts the other. However, that doesn’t matter. I will ask you one last time whether or not you are willing to exchange the Golden Lightning Bamboo treasure. So long as you hand it over to me, I will give you the method to save your Dao Companion and leave. Otherwise, I will just seize the treasure after killing you.

Since it isn't an ancient treasure, you must be carrying it within your body."

With a light sigh, Han Li icily said, "As it just so happens, my plans are similar to your own. Since you're the caster of the Soul Seal Curse, the method to eliminate the curse must be within your mind. Once I kill you, I will perform a soul search on your primal soul and acquire what I want to know."

"You will perform a soul search on me? You are the first person to dare say that to me for several hundreds of years. I will honor your audacity by leave your corpse intact." The black-robed youth smiled in fury before he raised his hands and shot several spell seals all around him. Then with a series of hums, seven pillars of blinding white light shot into the air. At the same time, silver-white flood dragons emerged from each of the pillars of light, roaring towards the skies.

"Not good! The Seven Pillar Dragons! Master must quickly leave." Before Han Li could clearly recognize the pillars, he heard Silvermoon's terrified voice in his ear.

# Chapter 788: Sword Formation Revealed

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Although Han Li didn't know how powerful the Seven Pillar Dragons were, when he heard the terror in Silvermoon's voice, he steeled his heart and summoned thirty-six of his Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords with a wave of his sleeve, having them flow around him like a school of fish.

Knowing that his opponent was a powerful devil cultivator, Han Li had no intention of slowly probing his abilities. With the full force of his newly tempered flying swords, he planned to subdue his opponent in a single blow.

As the thirty-six streaks of golden light revolved above Han Li's head, he struck the swarm of swords with several spell seals. This caused the golden lights to faintly tremble and immediately form over a hundred identical copies of themselves.

Just as Han Li thought to execute another spell seal and form the swords into the Aureate Formation, the seven pillars of light surrounding him rushed to attack him. The silver flood dragons inside the pillars looked at Han Li and opened their mouths, condensing sparkling silver balls of light.

Without further thought, Han Li pointed to the blue shield in front of him and in a flash of light it transformed into a barrier of blue ice that surrounded him. He then released the embroidered scarf with his other hand, and it transformed into a white mist of frost surrounding the ice barrier.

At that same moment, a white silhouette flew out of his sleeve and landed on the ground, revealing itself to be a beautiful woman. In Han Li's surprise, Silvermoon immediately raised her hand and released a streak of purple light, the Purple Cloudlace. With a tense expression, she made the cloudlace transform into a purple net of fire, forming the final layer of protection around them.

Han Li's heart trembled as he had already placed down two layers

of protection and Silvermoon still didn't believe it to be enough. Just how power were the Seven Pillar Dragons? Just as these thoughts appeared in Han Li's mind, the seven silver flood dragons silently released beams of nearly solid silver light.

The beams of light immediately struck the net of purple flames. The net managed to endure for a short moment before seven holes were melted through, and the seven silver lights continued to strike the mist of frost formed from the embroidered scarf. The mist roiled as soon as it was struck as if it wouldn't be able to endure for long.

When Han Li saw this, his felt breath turned cold. As things were going, the three layers of protection were about to be destroyed in an instant. These beams of light were incredibly powerful.

But just as these thoughts appeared in Han Li's mind, Silvermoon felt relieved and said, "So these turned out to be a counterfeit. I was worried over nothing." Silvermoon muttered to herself before forming an incantation gesture and spitting out a pearl the size of a thumb surrounded by a pink mist that carried a strong fragrance.

Silvermoon then began to utter an incantation with a sweet voice and extended her finger towards the pearl. Bang. The pearl exploded and transformed into countless gleaming specks of dust that soon merged with the blue ice barrier.

Han Li was somewhat surprised, but didn't intend to block her in the slightest. Once the ice barrier absorbed the fragments of the pearl, it flourished with light and its exterior shined as if it were suddenly covered with countless identical mirrors.

At that moment, the silver light pierced through the white mist and made its way towards the last layer of defense.

Han Li grew nervous at the sight, but he continued to cast spell seals without interruption. At an unknown time, the golden lights revolving around his head had begun to disappear.

The ice barrier released a blinding light as the seven silver beams faintly trembled before being reflected, striking back at the seven pillars of light at an even greater speed than before.

Not only did this come as a surprise to Han Li, but the black-robed youth was caught completely unprepared as well. His attention was now focused on the beautiful woman at Han Li's side. When she had uttered the word "counterfeit", a trace of astonishment appeared on his face.

Then in a series of explosions, the silver dragons within the pillars of light were submerged in silver light and disappeared without a trace.

Han Li stared blankly and found it difficult to believe that such vicious treasures were so easily taken care off.

Silvermoon pursed her lips, her face revealing a slight trace of satisfaction. She then pressed her hand against her chest and sighed with relief as spoke to Han Li, "Not only were they counterfeit, but they were only half finished. They had truly given me a fright."

The black-robed youth's expression grew stern upon seeing the Seven Pillar Dragons being destroyed. When he heard Silvermoon utter the words 'half finished', he said with a harsh tone, "Half finished? How could you know the method to destroy the Seven Pillar Dragons?"

Although he knew that the treasure he had acquired wasn't the genuine article described in legends, he had still felt that its abilities were somewhat lacking. This lingering doubt caused him to feel as if there was a ring of truth to Silvermoon's words.

Silvermoon's gaze flickered upon hearing him, but she had no intention of replying. Instead, she formed an incantation gesture with her hands and struck the ice barrier with a spell seal.

Suddenly, light flashed from the barrier and a pink mist shot out

from it, instantly condensing back into the pearl. Silvermoon then spat out a mist of light and swept the pearl back into her mouth.

The black-robed youth's initial fury soon disappeared and was replaced with delight, as he exclaimed, "Demon core! Hehe! So you were a demon fox! However, your cultivation is only in the seventh grade. This is truly baffling. As it just so happens, there are many cultivators in the Jin Empire that wish for a demon fox concubine of their own. The price for a demon fox capable of transformation is incredibly high. It seems this trip wasn't a wasted effort after all."

Silvermoon's expression changed, but soon her luminous eyes flickered. She then chuckled with her hand covering her mouth, "Although this servant does wish to leave with this Immortal master, I already have a master. I'm afraid I cannot comply."

Staring at Silvermoon with fierce greed, he casually said, "Your master? Soon that master will have his soul scattered. If you obediently follow me, I will spare your life, otherwise, you are simply ignoring my good intentions. Following this senior will be much better than staying in this remote and desolate land."

Still standing in place, Han Li derisively said, "Is your mind muddled? Her current master is doing quite well. If you wish to change my servant's mind, you should first pay attention to your surroundings."

The black-robed youth glanced at the swordlights surrounding him and disdainfully said, "My surroundings? Are you talking about this rubbish swordlight? Although it is surprising that you managed to refine so many flying swords, don't you know that a magic treasure's might depends on how much one has tempered it? Refining so many flying swords was an incredibly foolish decision."

"As for those transformed swordlights, that is merely a flashy but worthless trick. What use is this ability in a fight against cultivators of similar rank? I can stand in place and you

swordlights still won't be able to injure me."

When he heard this, Han Li wore a weird expression and killing intent burst from his eyes. "Your words are reasonable. However, I must first ask you if you are a late Nascent Soul-stage cultivator? If you aren't, then you will die." At that moment, he completed a spell seal and activated the stealthily placed Aureate Sword Formation.

When the black-robed youth heard Han Li, he felt a wave of unease and hastily flipped his hand, summoning a pitch-black hatchet. Talisman characters could be faintly seen on its surface and a vivid ghost face was carved on its handle.

At that moment, streaks of golden swordlight suddenly burst with radiance and released loud, clear rings as they streaked across the air, yet to attack.

The black-robed youth hastily spread out his spiritual sense to find the swordlights, but he wasn't able to locate a single one of them. This caused his heart to drop. Without any further hesitation, he snorted and released the black hatchet. In a flash of black light, it grew to twenty meters in the blink of an eye, and its edge gleamed from its sharpness.

In a blur, the huge hatchet fiercely chopped at the air, only for a golden light to suddenly blossom. An unremarkable golden thread suddenly appeared from underneath the huge hatchet and flashed before instantly fading away.

With a bang, the huge hatchet was split down the middle and fell to the floor.

"This is..." The black-robed youth's disdain suddenly disappeared and his expression turned grave. He quickly raised his hand and summoned an emerald saber, which shot through the air before a similar scene occurred. The green streak flew about thirty meters before being shredded by several streaks of golden threads. Then in a burst of green light, it fell to the ground in seven pieces.

“Xi! A sword formation!” The black-robed youth recognized what this was due to his vast experience as his blood ran cold. This kind of sword formation required several tens, no, several hundreds of cultivators in order to employ it. However, Han Li alone was able to lay down such a fearsome sword formation, much to the black-robed youth’s shock.

Han Li saw he had recognized that this was a sword formation, but had no intention of giving the black robed youth the opportunity to consider how to break it. Han Li promptly put his hands in an incantation gesture and contacted all of his swordlights with his spiritual sense, activating the entire Aureate Sword Formation.

A strange scene suddenly developed near the black-robed youth as countless golden threads suddenly flickered around the youth, intermittently coming in and out of existence. These flickers appeared without a pattern and slowly closed in on him.

When he saw this, the youth’s expression turned pale and he suddenly patted his storage pouch and took out ten white pearls filled with veins of crimson. He then began to spin and tossed the pearls all around him.

# Chapter 789: Ghost Sifting Banner

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Han Li's heart stirred at the sight of these pearls. They appeared to be the same as his own lightning beads. As the thought appeared in his head, he willed the Aureate Sword Formation to continue onward.

The sword threads were one of the abilities of the Aureate Formation, similar to the sword threads used by sword cultivators, but the formation was capable of summoning over a hundred astonishing threads of sword Qi. With the sword formation's might coupled with the Auric Essence infused swords, these sword threads were far more formidable than those from common sword cultivators. Ordinary treasures were similarly incapable of blocking the swords' incisive strikes.

As for items like the Lightning Bead, Han Li had no fear of them. So long as the true thirty-six swords were unharmed, the sword formation would easily reform itself even if the sword threads were scattered. The Aureate Sword Formation couldn't be set back by any attacks.

Just as Han Li thought this, golden light flashed as the pearls contacted the sword formation, splitting the pearls into several pieces.

Surprisingly, the pearls weren't explosives. Instead, they released a dense black-red mist of blood. The blood mist immediately dispersed and leaked through the air, spreading a pungent, sickly sweet scent.

The bead was known as a Blood Mine and it was said that they were refined from the most putrid materials found in the world. So long as one didn't have particular Devil Dao treasures, the treasure's spiritual nature and power would greatly decrease upon entering the blood mist. Even if a powerful magic treasure with a highly spiritual nature were to enter it, they would take days of

purification with Nascent flames in order to recover from the damage.

Of course, these Blood Mines were incredibly rare. Not only were the materials used to refine them seldom seen, but the odds of a successful refinement were minuscule. These tensome beads were something the black-robed youth had spent over a hundred years accumulating.

This youth was an elder from one of the Ten Great Devil Sects of the Jin Empire. With his vast experience, he immediately thought to use the Blood Mines to corrupt the swords comprising Han Li's sword formation.

A sword formation needed great coordination in order to display its might. If a few of the swords fell out of balance, the sword formation would collapse. Using Blood Mines was one of the most common methods used by Jin Empire devil cultivators to combat sword formations. And since the Blood Mines were incredibly rare items, the youth normally wouldn't use them in solo battles. He would only deploy them in large-scale conflicts as sword formations usually couldn't be activated by lone cultivators.

Although Han Li didn't know what this blood mist was, he immediately sensed something strange about it. Just as he pondered about it, faint rolls of thunder could be heard coming from within it as flashes of golden light appeared from the blood mist, followed by arcs of golden lightning. When the golden lightning struck the blood mist, the mist scattered in an explosion. In the blink of an eye, the Divine Devilbane Lightning and the tensome pockets of blood mist had erupted in mutual destruction.

Han Li was astonished by the sight, as this was the first time he had ever seen the Divine Devilbane Lightning take action on its own. It had shot out of his flying swords without any orders! It appeared that the wicked nature of the blood mist had counteracted the Divine Devilbane Lightning, a truly astonishing discovery indeed.

Han Li didn't know that the Blood Mines were specialized in dealing with the treasures of the Righteous Dao. When met by the Divine Devilbane Lightning, which specialized in subduing Devil Dao techniques, the two just so happened to counteract one another. However, the quantity of the lightning contained in the thirty-six swords was vastly greater than the amount of blood mist. As a result, the blood mist was cleanly eliminated in the blink of an eye.

The black-robed man's complexion paled and he shouted with fright, "Divine Devilbane Lightning! The flying swords were treasures crafted from Golden Lightning Bamboo. Impossible! How did you acquire so much of it?"

"I'll answer that after I send you to the underworld!" Han Li took a deep breath and ordered the sword formation to continue since the blood mist had temporarily stopped the golden threads. The swords threads then continued to closed in on the black-robed youth without a sound.

Although the Aureate Sword Formation was immensely powerful, it was difficult for Han Li to sustain with his current cultivation. It was a massive drain on his magic power and he wasn't able to increase the speed at which the sword formation moved after activation. Otherwise, he would've had the sword threads close in on the black-robed youth in the blink of an eye and put an immediate end to him, preventing him from figuring out a way to resist.

Han Li reckoned that the optimal time to cultivate the Aureate Sword Formation would be during mid-Nascent Soul stage. If he wasn't only using half of his flying swords, he simply wouldn't be able to activate the sword formation due to his level of cultivation, despite how his magic power exceeded that of ordinary early Nascent Soul cultivators.

The black-robed youth surrounded himself in a layer of black Qi and snorted. With an imposing tone, he said, "You truly believe a

trifling sword formation can truly trap me? Your sword formation may be incisive, but can it cut my sect's protective treasure?" He glanced at the golden threads that were less than thirty meters away and silently raised his hand before striking at his chest.

Black blood sprayed out of his mouth, as a green, inch-long banner appeared from within the blood.

As soon as the banner appeared, it flickered with green light and completely absorbed the black blood that surrounded it, turning it dark green.

The black-robed youth gloomily waved at the banner and it shot into his hands as a streak of black light. The green banner brightly glowed and immediately grew until it was a meter tall. The banner now glistened with green light as if it was densely covered in Yin clouds, causing its surface to be concealed. However, one of the corners of the banner seemed to be missing as if it were damaged.

Han Li's pupils shrank at the sight of the banner. "The Ghost Sifting Banner!"

Originally, the Yin Sifting Sect Master had wanted to use their sect protecting treasure to fight Devil Concord. While it hadn't actually been used in battle, its name had stuck in Han Li's mind. Now that the black-robed youth took out the small banner, Han Li managed to guess what it was.

The black-robed youth coldly smiled after hearing that Han Li recognized it. He said with absolute confidence, "Aren't you clever? This is one of the main banners of the twenty Ghost Sifting Banners. I'll have you experience its might."

Soon after, the youth firmly grasped onto the banner and waved it towards one of the golden threads. With a gust, a dark-green Yin cloud flew out from the banner and surged, enveloping the body of the black-robed youth.

The bone-chilling Yin cloud expanded and the sky was suddenly

turned pitch-black, as the cloud blotted out the sun from the sky. This incredible darkness had somehow spread from the green ghost mist with ghastly wails and screams echoing all around.

With a mere shake of the banner, the entire world around them had changed. It was no wonder why he was so confident in this treasure. Despite Han Li's confidence in the Aureate Sword Formation, even he felt dumbfounded at the current situation.

At that moment, the sound of tearing wind suddenly arrived from the flag, and several black threads shot out from the mist surrounding the youth, directly attacking Han Li.

Golden light flashed as the sword formation's restrictions were activated. Countless golden threads chopped the black threads into pieces. However, the threads immediately turned into green mist and returned back to the main body.

Before Han Li could react, the black-robed youth shouted in alarm from within the green mist. The Yin ghost threads were said to be incredibly durable, but they were easily struck down in a single blow, much to his surprise. After a moment of thought, he decided to unleash the full power of the ghost banner.

He suddenly tossed the green banner from the mist and it bore into the earth a meter in front of him.

Soon, he began to utter a cryptic incantation and a series of Yin winds swept up the dense fog around him, sweeping towards the banner at its center. In the blink of an eye, the banner grew to six meters in height and the mist that had been covering it scattered, revealing its true form. Its appearance vastly shocked Han Li.

Han Li fiercely shouted, “How many souls did you use to refine that banner!? How many people have you killed!?”

The green banner's surface was densely filled by innumerable faces. They all continuously squirmed from the flag as if they were alive and wore expressions of agony.

The youth's sinister voice spoke from within the fog, "How many? Who knows? It should be around a hundred thousand or so. There are also at least several hundred cultivator souls in there as they are required to refine a single main banner."

Han Li grew silent and he coldly stared at the green mist. A moment later, he said, "You are all damned."

The youth sneered and said, "Damned? There are many that have said this to me before, but here I am, alive and well. And all the people who said this to me had their souls seized by the banner, becoming a part of it. You will be no exception." He then struck the banner with a red spell seal.

Green light magnificently flashed, summoning a meter-wide hole in the flag. Black Qi flowed out of it, releasing a series of Yin winds and piercing whistles. Soon, huge skulls flew out in a line from the hole, their eyes glowing with ghastly green flames and trailing green smoke.

The biggest of the skull had huge bull horns emerging from it, but the rest of it features appeared entirely human.

Han Li was alarmed. Could it be that the skulls were from metamorphosis stage demon beasts? But for the time being, he placed the thought at the back of his head.

Once the first wave of skulls emerged from the flag, various flaming ghost skulls followed. In the blink of an eye, over a hundred ghost skulls surrounded the black-robed youth.

Pointing at Han Li from within the mist, the youth shouted, "Go!"

# Chapter 790: Devouring Devils and Ghosts

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These eerie white skulls screamed before launching green flame wisps from their mouths towards Han Li. Of course, when the flame wisps traveled too far, golden threads suddenly appeared and flashed towards them.

But something different happened this time. The golden threads sliced the skulls apart, but in a flash of green light, they restored themselves as if they hadn't suffered any damage. Additionally, they weren't impeded by the sword threads at all and continued their approach.

Han Li was stunned when he saw this, but he soon realized that the ghost skulls had no physical body; they were refined Yin Ghosts. Although his sword threads may be fierce, they couldn't cut through something intangible.

However, Han Li was hardly flustered. As the ghost skulls approached him, he willed a net of golden lightning to appear in the air and intercept them. Since they were ghosts, he decided to activate the Divine Devilbane Lightning.

To Han Li's surprise, the ghost skulls revealed fear upon seeing the golden net and came to a stop, but after the horned ghost skull shrieked, all of the skulls opened their mouths and shot green flame wisps towards the golden net.

In a roar of thunder, the lightning net flashed and exterminate the flame wisps, but the net's advance was stopped, restrained by their unending barrage.

Han Li frowned and revealed an expression of surprise. If they were common flame wisps they would've immediately turned to smoke after touching the Divine Devilbane Lightning, but these flame wisps were able to forcefully restrain the lightning, much to his alarm. The Ghost Sifting Banner's title as the Yin Sifting Sect's protective treasure was well deserved.

When the black-robed youth saw that the ghost skulls were able to block the Divine Devilbane Lightning, he couldn't help but smile in relief. While he appeared confident, he was actually filled with dread.

If the flag wasn't damaged, he wouldn't be worried about the devil skulls being able to resist the Divine Devilbane Lightning. But without the opportunity to repair it after it was damaged, he had been worried about it being able to resist the Divine Devilbane Lightning.

Since his worries had been addressed, the youth wickedly grinned and continuously sent spell seals into the banner. The meter-wide gap in the banner quickly swelled to the size of three meters, resulting in even more ghost skulls emerging. With ghost mist spreading through the air, loud ghost shrieks and wails accompanied the skulls.

With the previous skulls resisting the golden net, the latter wave of skulls flew past the sword formation and charged straight towards Han Li.

When Han Li saw this, he calmly slapped his storage pouch and summoned a streak of black light that circled once in the air before falling to the ground. The light disappeared to reveal a small jet-black ape, the Weeping Soul Beast.

The ape appeared as if it had just woken up and its eyes were half closed. When it sniffed at the air, it suddenly opened its eyes and looked at the ghost skulls not far away, howling with excitement.

When the approaching ghost skulls saw the Weeping Soul Beast, they were shaken and immediately began to spiral in place, unwilling to continue their charge forward. At that moment, the howls they had been releasing were abruptly cut off as if in a display of fear.

When the black-robed youth saw this, his heart thumped as the sword formation was drawing ever closer to him.

In his desperation, he shot grey light from his mouth towards his palm and lightly spun around his hand before severing his fingers in a bloody display. As the fingers fell from his hand, they exploded into clouds of blood mist and quickly drifted towards the horned ghost skull.

A sinister light twinkled from the ghost skull's eyes and it opened its mouth to inhale the blood mist. The flames surrounding the skull suddenly rampaged around it, coercing the other skulls to launch a wave of green flame wisps towards the Weeping Soul Beast.

When the Weeping Soul Beast saw this, it hammered its chest as black light wrapped around its body. In the blink of an eye, it grew ten meters tall. It then snorted, releasing a yellow mist of light from its nose that swept away the ghostly flame wisps and directly approached the group of ghost skulls.

As the yellow mist of light swept past them, the group of ghost skulls were sucked in without any resistance. When the remaining ghost skulls saw this, they scattered in terror and even the horned ghost skull's rage wasn't able to stop them.

At that moment, the yellow mist of light spread around the fleeing ghost skulls and trapped them. When the horned ghost skull saw this, it condensed a brilliant mass of green light around its skull and grew a body the size of two meters, turning into a full-fledged devil ghost with hair draped around its face and curved horns. As soon as the ghost appeared, it immediately spread out its hands and launched a barrage of black fireballs towards the yellow light mist in a wave of explosive booms.

As soon as the fireballs entered the yellow mist, they completely disappeared and not a sound was produced from the impact. When the devil ghost saw this, it wore an expression of terror and turned around to flee, but it was already too late. The yellow mist closed in on it and instantly absorbed it inside, leaving nothing behind.

The yellow mist then quickly returned into the Weeping Soul Beast's mouth before it spouted out another mist from its nose, sweeping the air clean of any remaining skulls.

When the black-robed youth saw this, he wore an expression of fright and rage. Although he had heard that Han Li's ape beast had absorbed the undead Qi from the Copper-armored Corpses and destroyed a majority of them, he hadn't taken it to heart.

He absolutely didn't think that the spirit beast would be able to devour the Yin Essence Devil Skulls created from the Yin Sifting Banner. Even the leading devil skull had been absorbed without being able to put up any resistance, leaving him feeling terror and helplessness.

If he knew that Han Li's spirit beast had the ability to devour devils and ghosts, he definitely wouldn't have accepted the task of meeting him alone. The other elders of the sect knew of the spirit beast's abilities and had grown fearful. Its abilities were as much of a threat to them as the Golden Lightning Bamboo.

As these thoughts surged through the youth's mind, he felt a wave of regret. By then the golden threads were less than ten meters away from him. With his death slowly drawing closer, he couldn't remain calm and hastily slapped his storage pouch. Eight treasures instantly shot out all around him in balls of various colored light.

When they reached the edge of the sword formation, countless golden threads flashed by and shredded the treasures into scrap.

The youth paled at the sight of this and with panic filling his mind, he waved his hand to the Ghost Sifting Banner. With the flag back in his hand, he gritted his teeth and began to revolve around the banner with both his hands on it. He turned into one with the banner and transformed into a cloud of eerie green mist before shooting towards the sky.

As of current, he could only hope that the might of his sect

protecting treasure would be able to withstand the attacks from the sword formation and allow him to escape. Otherwise, he could only sit and wait to die.

When Han Li saw this, he knew that the youth had exhausted his options and was driven to desperation. As a result, he opened his mouth and shot a ball of golden lightning. As soon as the golden lightning left his mouth, it ruptured, forming a huge golden net several tens of meters wide.

At that moment, the mistform black-robed youth had reached the edge of the sword formation. Over a hundred golden threads waved around him, with each flash shredding away a fraction of the Yin mist protecting him. In the blink of an eye, a majority of the mist had already been dispersed.

The Yin mist scattered in an attempt to escape, but there were too many golden threads blocking him path with no chance of escape. Every gap was immediately blocked with tens of golden threads, pushing the mist back and trapping him inside.

With only a thin layer of the Yin mist remaining, the youth's voice hoarsely shouted in rage, "You actually want to kill me! Don't you want the method to dissolve the Soul Seal Curse?"

Han Li calmly responded, "Don't worry. I will just extract the information from your primal soul."

"You want to use a Soul Search Technique? You don't... Ah!" The youth shouted in terror, but the last layer of the Yin mist protecting him was shredded away, cutting him off. In a blood-curdling scream, his body was dismembered into a myriad of pieces. Only a ball of green light remained, his Nascent Soul.

It took this chance to try and escape, but a net of Divine Devilbane Lightning had already been set up outside. Han Li pointed to the net and uttered, "Restrain," immediately closing the net around the youth's Nascent Soul.

As soon as the Nascent Soul encountered the net, lightning flickered followed by screams of pain. The Nascent Soul suddenly shrieked with resentment, “If you wish to use a Soul Search Technique on me, I will detonate my Nascent Soul. I won’t let you have your way!”

“Detonate your Nascent Soul?” Han Li frowned and immediately stopped the net from closing in.

The Nascent Soul rejoiced upon seeing this and immediately shrieked, “So long as you let my Nascent Soul go free, I will tell you the method to dissolve the curse and save your Dao companion. Otherwise, you will have no way of finding out.”

Silent, Han Li’s gaze flickered as he considered the conditions. At that moment, a light suddenly appeared around the Nascent Soul as a purple net wrapped around it and immediately tightened. At that moment, Silvermoon silently appeared behind it in a flash of white light. She quickly spat a fragrant pink mist from her mouth and launched streaks of silver from her fingers.

# Chapter 791: Along the Way

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The Nascent Soul grew dizzy as the fragrant pink mist gathered around it, and its mind weakened. When the silver lights struck it in quick succession, its body was frozen and completely disabled, rendering it incapable of detonating itself.

The Nascent Soul's face paled and stared at the white-clothed woman next to Han Li in disbelief.

"Not bad! Your actions have resolved the situation cleanly." Although he was the one who had ordered Silvermoon to attack, he praised her nonetheless.

Silvermoon smiled and said, "It was all because Master told me to attack at an opportune time. This person only wished to escape and was careless, allowing me to replace myself with an illusion and escape his notice." Afterwards, she waved to her illusion and it dissolved into a ball of white light.

Han Li said nothing further and smiled. He had the giant net of golden lightning transform into a golden ball that flew into his hand and disappeared without a trace. As for the Aureate Sword Formation, Han Li had already dissolved it and had the thirty-six swords shrink before flying back into his sleeve.

Han Li took this opportunity and calmly looked at the black-robed youth's Nascent Soul. It tried to curse as loudly as it could, but it lacked the strength to even open its mouth.

Han Li's expression sank and he sullenly said, "Silvermoon, bring him to the edge of the forest and search him for the method to dissolve the Soul Seal Curse." After speaking, he took to the skies and flew towards the other side of the forest.

Silvermoon respectfully answered, "Yes, Master." Grabbing onto the Nascent Soul, she followed after him. A pink fragrant mist soon scattered across the forest after they left.

About a hundred kilometers away from the island where Han Li battled with the black-robed youth, six streaks of light were making their way towards the island. The one that headed the party was a silver-haired old man, Elder Cheng of the Drifting Cloud Sect.

A red-nosed fat old man following after him asked, “Fellow Daoist Cheng, did you sense correctly? The transportation formation was rather simple. It seems somewhat out of the ordinary for it to be able to transport someone so far.”

“I can’t be wrong. I sensed it clearly, and Junior Martial Brother Han should be close to here. Be careful everyone. He should be a devil cultivator at mid-Nascent Soul stage at the very least. Although we greatly outnumber him, we must be careful with regards to our weaker cultivation.”

At the side, the Child Fire Dragon smiled and said, “Don’t worry. Brother Long has brought along the Divine Bewildering Bell. Even if we are no match, we shouldn’t have a problem escaping.”

Senior Martial Brother Cheng glanced at the grey-robed old man and gratefully said, “That’s true. If it weren’t for Brother Long bringing along such a precious treasure to assist us, I wouldn’t have dared to bring you all to brave this danger. After all, if the devil cultivator is truly the Yin Sifting Sect Master, we would find ourselves in dire straits.”

The grey-clothed old man smiled and politely said, “It was nothing. In the past, Brother Cheng had done me a great kindness. It is only fair that I exert myself to help. Furthermore, this Yin Sifting Sect cultivator must hold us in little esteem to dare to injure someone so deep within our State of Xi. Naturally, we must show him that the cultivators of the State of Xi are not to be trifled with.”

Amongst the group, a large man with a dignified appearance smiled and said, “However, I am rather curious about your sect’s

Fellow Daoist Han. I've heard your Junior Martial Brother made a magnificent display of power in the war against the Moulan, even to the point of turning the tide of the war. I hold him in very high regards and wish to become his friend."

The red-nosed old man chuckled and agreed, "That's right. I've also heard about Fellow Daoist Han's thunderous reputation lately. I also wish to make his acquaintance."

"That will be easy. Once we help Junior Martial Brother Han resolve this matter, I will introduce you all. However, I am worried about Junior Martial Brother Han's safety. That devil cultivator is truly cunning, using that transportation formation to rid him of us. Perhaps something has happened to him during this time while he fought against him alone."

"Don't worry. Since he schemed to have Han Li alone, his cultivation can't be too high or else he wouldn't resort to such tricks in the first place. With Fellow Daoist Han's cultivation, there shouldn't be too great a difference."

"I hope Fellow Daoist Ji is correct." Senior Martial Brother Cheng bitterly smiled. From what he saw on the day that Nangong Wan was attacked, he clearly understood that if the devil cultivator wasn't at late Nascent Soul stage, he was at the peak of mid-Nascent Soul stage at the very least. He wouldn't be easy to deal with.

Senior Martial Brother Cheng didn't wish for such a powerful, newly-joined elder of the Drifting Cloud Sect to immediately suffer from something like this. Fortunately, he was able to sense a trace of Han Li's existence and was able to calm himself down, knowing that Han Li was still alive.

As the six Nascent Soul cultivators chatted, they slowly drew closer to the small island where Han Li had battled the black-clothed youth and their expressions grew more solemn. Senior Martial Brother Cheng yelped and the party came to a sudden stop.

“Brother Cheng, what’s the matter?”

“Junior Martial Brother Han seems to be flying towards us. I’m not sure whether the matter was already resolved, or...” Senior Martial Brother Cheng didn’t speak any further, but the others naturally knew what he meant. It was possible that he had been captured alive or was running away.

The grey-robed old man calmly said, “Let’s make our preparations. If something truly happened to Fellow Daoist Han, we’ll be able to rescue him.” Soon after, he slapped the storage pouch, taking a small yellow bell in his hand while silently watching his front as he held it. When the others saw this, they all took out their own treasures in preparation for a battle.

Senior Martial Brother Cheng’s expression grew sullen, slight fear betrayed from his face. A short moment later, they saw an azure light flying towards them.

“It’s Junior Martial Brother Han. Nothing happened to him.” When Senior Martial Brother Cheng saw the azure light, he sighed with relief and smiled. The other cultivators were astonished to see this. Since Han Li was safe, could it be that the matter with the devil cultivator had been handled?

As the other cultivators pondered over this, the azure light quickly arrived before them to reveal Han Li.

Han Li frowned when he first appeared as if he were worried. But when he saw these cultivators, he forced a smile and saluted them. “Senior Martial Brother Cheng, Fellow Daoist Fire Dragon, you’re here. These Fellow Daoists must’ve also come to help me. I can’t thank you enough for troubling yourselves over me.”

After closely examining Han Li, the grey-clothed old man surnamed Long, humbly said, “Fellow Daoist must be joking. We were too late and there is nothing to help you with. We’re rather embarrassed.” As if headed by the grey-robed old man, they all glanced at Han Li with forced smiles.

When Senior Martial Brother Cheng saw that there was no one pursuing Han Li, he couldn't help but ask, "Junior Martial Brother Han, what happened with the devil cultivator? Did you escape from him?"

Han Li indifferently replied, "I've already killed him and disposed of his Nascent Soul. However, he wasn't the Yin Sifting Sect Master, merely one of its elders."

Senior Martial Brother Cheng asked with a tone of disbelief, "What? You've already killed him? Although he wasn't a late Nascent Soul cultivator, he should have been at the mid-Nascent Soul stage at the very least. You really managed to kill him?"

When Old Man Long and the others heard this, they revealed astonishment. Since the devil cultivator was able to injure an early Nascent Soul cultivator in the Drifting Cloud Sect and easily escape, they naturally knew that he was a formidable character. If Old Man Long hadn't brought the Divine Bewildering Bell, the others might not have been brave enough to come.

Now that they heard that Han Li was able to destroy even the devil cultivator's Nascent Soul, they were greatly surprised.

"It was only a matter of luck. I just happened to be able to subdue his techniques." Han Li casually spoke and pondered for a moment before tossing a black object towards Senior Martial Brother Cheng. The old man caught the item and examined it with a grim expression. There was a dense layer of talisman characters on the medallion, and the character for "Sift" was engraved at its center.

Having already guessed what it was, Senior Martial Brother Cheng still asked, "What's this?"

Han Li faintly smiled and said, "This is the command medallion of a Yin Sifting Sect elder that the devil cultivator left behind. It's an ancient treasure of some power and should be sufficient to confirm his identity."

The others turned their gazes to the medallion upon hearing this. When they saw how strange the medallion was, they didn't doubt Han Li's words.

The others couldn't help but ask about the details of the battle, but Han Li simply played the matter off. When the others saw that he didn't feel like talking, they tactfully remained silent. However, they all still intended to befriend Han Li. After all, he was someone who could slay a mid Nascent Soul-stage devil cultivator and there were many benefits to befriending such a powerful figure.

Since the others had come with the intention of helping Han Li, he treated them courteously and chatted with them on the way back.

Halfway back, Han Li and Senior Martial Brother Cheng took their leave from the rest of the group and returned to the Drifting Cloud Sect.

Within the official hall of the sect, the silver-haired old man asked the question that was lingering in his mind, "Did you find the method of dissolving the Soul Seal Curse? I saw that you had a heavy heart on the way back and were forcing yourself to appear calm. Could it be that you didn't find it?"

# Chapter 792: The Far West

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Han Li took a seat on a chair and wryly smiled as he answered, “The Yin Sifting Sect Elder only knew the method to cast the curse, not dissolve it. According to what I found out from the Soul Searching Technique, only the Yin Sifting Sect Master and the sect’s great elder know it. All the other elders wouldn’t know the method to dissolve it either.”

“He didn’t know the method to dissolve the curse?” Senior Martial Brother Cheng frowned and spoke with a tone of disbelief.

Han Li’s wore a gloomy expression, “That’s right! It seems that the removal of the Soul Seal Curse involves an incredibly powerful technique belonging to the Yin Sifting Sect. Only the Sect Master and the Great Elder are ever taught it.”

Senior Martial Brother Cheng’s expression turned grave. “Without the method to dissolve the curse, Little Sister Nangong will...”

Han Li’s gaze flickered and he continued, “Although there is no way to directly dissolve the curse, it’s not as if there are no other methods in this world. From what I managed to discover by searching the soul of the Yin Sifting Sect elder, there is a method to forcefully break the curse with the assistance of a few particular items.”

With roused spirits, the old man asked, “What items are able to dissolve the curse? Please tell me.”

Han Li sighed and said, “These items are all incredibly difficult to find in this world. I fear I may not be able to find them.” He then muttered the name of the items, leaving Senior Martial Brother Cheng alarmed.

The old man muttered, “Not to mention the Heavenly South, but I fear that the entire world might not have these items.”

Han Li's mouth twitched and he calmly replied, "This might not be certain. I just so happen to know the whereabouts of one of the items but it will be difficult to acquire. I must carefully prepare to even have a chance at it."

The old man was shocked by what he heard, but seeing that Han Li didn't intend to give any further details, he didn't ask further. Instead, he sincerely said, "Is this a matter that the sect can help with? Please do not restrain yourself!"

After a moment of silence, Han Li shook his head and said, "No. This isn't a matter that can be solved with numbers."

The old man twirled his beard. "Since Junior Martial Brother seems to be well aware of the situation, I won't ask about it. But if there is anything that you need, please don't hesitate to use the sect."

Han Li smiled and said, "Thank you, I appreciate your kindness. I'll be going to visit Wan'er now."

Senior Martial Brother Cheng bid Han Li farewell and remained alone in the hall. After a moment of thought, he sighed and flew towards his cave residence.

The hidden room was untouched as well as the block of ice that laid within. Han Li stood in front of it and looked at the girl frozen inside with a confused expression.

It was unknown how long Han Li stood there before a complicated expression flickered over his face. He softly muttered, "Wan'er, your courage is truly great. To grasp the chance for life, you refined the most dangerous technique of your incarnation arts, the Youthful Celestial Moon. Could it be that you didn't know that this technique would cause you to be reborn? If I truly dispelled your Soul Seal Curse, it could trigger something from your technique. How could I not be worried!" His voice grew softer as he spoke. He then touched the thick and dense block of ice and caressed Nangong Wan's face.

“You couldn’t have known that the cultivator who placed the curse on you didn’t know how to dispel it, but there isn’t too much to worry about. From the soul search I found another method to dissolve the curse by using some items. Although these items are extremely rare in this world, it is fortunate that Devilfall Valley happens to contain one of them.

“While the inner core of an ancient flame beast would normally be impossible to find, it just so happens that an Ancient Flame Toad is currently within Devilfall Valley. I will not hesitate to enter the valley in several years time. Bit it was said that this method can only dissolve the curse halfway. And even if it isn’t successful, it will greatly weaken it and give me enough time to pay a visit to the State of Jin. When that happens, I will return with the method to rid you of this curse, regardless of what must be done.” As Han Li spoke those last words, his voice grew frigid.

After speaking to Nangong Wan, gloom filled his heart. After staying inside the hidden room for a moment more, he walked out and flew back towards his cave residence.

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In the main hall of his cave residence, Han Li sat down with his head lowered in thought. Silvermoon obediently stood by his side, her eyes continuously shifting toward Han Li’s with a trace of playfulness.

Without turning his head, Han Li indifferently asked, “What is there to look at? Did something break out on my face?”

“Master must be joking. I simply wish to know what Master will decide. It is neither a long nor short time before entering Devilfall Valley. Also, both Violet Spirit and Marquis Nanlong invited you to head in. Who are you planning to head into the valley with?” Silvermoon’s smile faded away and then she hesitantly continued, “Devilfall Valley is known to be the most dangerous area in the Heavenly South. Even if Master’s abilities are great, it will be

exceptionally dangerous to head inside. Are there no other methods to save Miss Nangong Wan? Entering there is simply too great a risk to take.”

Han Li shook his head and calmly said, “The other items? You mean the eggshell of the Myriad Darkgold Bird? Or the fruit of the Enlightened Flower? These items have long been extinct in this world. Even if they still remained, they would be concealed in a desolate corner of the world and be impossible to find. The demon core of the Ancient Flame Toad is the easiest option. So long as I follow Master Cang Kun’s route inside and don’t act with greed, I shouldn’t meet my end there. As for which party I will join, I’ll have to decide that later.”

Silvermoon lowered her head and offered no contest, “If Master has already decided, then there is nothing for me to say.”

Han Li smiled and rubbed his chin. “Before we enter Devilfall Valley, I must prepare to go to the Far West and acquire the final two layers for the Great Development Technique. I’ll also have to go and see whether or not the Thousand Bamboo School has any designs for high-grade puppets. As for the puppet refinement methods that I acquired from Soaring Heavens City, they can’t be used for some time. The materials used to refine them are far too rare. Additionally, their main ingredient, the Myriad Year Ironwood, requires a large amount of green liquid to mature. They aren’t something that I’ll be able to refine in a short amount of time. The Thousand Bamboo School should have some puppet designs that possess the strength of a Core Formation stage cultivator. With those puppets, it will be safer to enter Devilfall Valley. With only a few years, honing my magic treasures or cultivating my techniques wouldn’t have much effect.” With that said, Han Li narrowed his eyes as if having already thought out his plans.

“Master’s words do hold reason, let us do as you say.” After some thought, Silvermoon smiled and agreed. For a time, a charming

expression appeared on her face.

Suddenly, something came to Han Li's mind and he frowned. "However, it will be somewhat difficult to arrive at the Far West despite it being adjacent to the Heavenly South. I'll have to pass through the Righteous Dao's State of Zhu and thousands of kilometers of desert."

"Desert?" Silvermoon opened her mouth in surprise.

"That's right. Not to mention that there is something odd about the desert. For some unknown reason, its skies are always plagued by fierce windstorms. If we wish to pass through it, we'll only be able to walk or our magic power will be exhausted halfway through the journey. Additionally, the Far West is the size of only two medium-sized countries in the Heavenly South and are quite impoverished. As a result, while most of the Heavenly South know of their existence, no one finds it worth the effort to make it past the desert. It is also said that the entire area is ruled by the Thousand Bamboo School."

Silvermoon frowned and worriedly said, "Since we can't fly through the desert, wouldn't it take far too long?"

"If we walk the entire distance, the round trip would take around a year even if it goes smoothly. That's why I must make preparations before I leave. While preparations are underway, I must also have you help me and will leave this in your hands. Pour green liquid on it and see whether or not it shows signs of life." As Han Li said this, he took out a jade box from his storage pouch and handed it over to her.

Silvermoon recognized the contents at a glance and spoke with surprise, "The Profound Goddess Palm! Master, you are letting me handle it?"

Han Li mysteriously smiled at Silvermoon and said, "Hehe, if this item doesn't revive, then it will be simply be used as a material for tool refinement. Also, I may as well take advantage of this time to

refine the Wood Spirit Nascent. Additionally, I'll have to go down and deal with the Corpse Demon. I've acquired a method of refining a devil corpse suitable for it from the Yin Sifting Sect Elder. After all, leaving the corpse demon alone is like leaving a calamity waiting to happen inside the Dreamcloud Mountains. With so many matters to attend to, I'll have to hand the matters inside the cave residence over to you."

"Fine. I'll follow your orders as I was the one who recognized you as my Master after all." Silvermoon pursed her lips and agreed with a tone of helplessness.

Han Li grinned and spoke a few words more before leaving the main hall. At that moment, Silvermoon suddenly shouted for Han Li to stay after a moment of hesitation, "Master, there is something that has been on my mind for a while. Can I ask you about it?" She wore a stern expression.

# Chapter 793: Conquer

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“What is it?” Han Li turned his head to look at Silvermoon, his curiosity written all over his face.

With a deliberate tone, Silvermoon asked, “Ever since Master has taken me in as an artifact spirit, he hasn’t used me as an artifact spirit in battle or to boost the power of his flying swords. Could you tell me why?”

Han Li frowned in surprise and asked, “Why are you asking this?”

Silvermoon lowered her head and whispered, “It’s nothing but a casual question. After all, my true identity is that of an artifact spirit.”

After a moment of silence, Han Li said, “Artifact spirit? You believe yourself to be a common artifact spirit? Common artifact spirits don’t possess any intelligence. Why even ask such a question? Even if I summoned you as an artifact spirit, it would consume too much of your spirit essence. If one relies on using their artifact spirit too often, it may even lead to the spirit’s dispersal. And from my point of view, your demon fox body is very useful to me. Unless it is a last resort, I will not be using you as an artifact spirit. Also, if your cultivation suffers as a result, it wouldn’t benefit me either.” Afterwards, Han Li turned around and left the hall.

Silvermoon remained in the hall, her head lowered as she grew lost in thought. A short moment later, she glanced at the jade box in her hand and walked away with a smile.

Once Han Li entered the cave residence, he began to prepare to cultivate the ability for a second Nascent Soul. Since a divine ability this powerful went beyond the realm of normality, Han Li’s preparations to refine this technique lasted for quite a while.

At the moment, Han Li was sitting cross-legged on the ground. His hands held a faint azure jade slip and he was reading through it with his spiritual sense as if trying to comprehend something. The Profound Nascent Formation Arts were recorded on the jade slip.

A short time later, he withdrew his spiritual sense from the jade slip and closed his eyes. He then formed a hand gesture and began to whisper an incantation. His body froze and azure light flickered from the top of the head, suddenly summoning a Nascent Soul intertwined with azure light — the Nascent Soul that Han Li bitterly cultivated for two hundred years to create.

The Nascent Soul appeared slightly more powerful than when it first appeared several years ago. Its eyes were a shiny jet black and appeared intelligent.

Having only cultivated his Nascent Soul for several years, he only dared to manifest it in an extremely safe area, else it could be weakened if something unexpected happened.

It sat on Han Li's head for a moment more and glanced around the room before suddenly enveloping itself in a ball of azure light and floating around the hidden room.

At first it was unaccustomed to fly, but as it became more practiced, it was able to do it increasingly faster. In the end, the Nascent Soul was able to fly erratically around the hidden room in a display of vast skill.

After another moment, the Nascent Soul stopped and floated to the corner of the hidden room as if thinking of something. It grasped its small hands in an incantation gesture and in a flash of light, the Nascent Soul suddenly disappeared and then reappeared above Han Li's head, its complexion slightly pale from having exhausted so much of its vitality. This was the divine ability that only Nascent Souls were capable of, true instantaneous movement.

The Nascent Soul stretched its back and turned into a streak of white light before entering Han Li's head. Han Li then slowly

opened his eyes, his expression appearing grave.

“It appears the Nascent Soul has consolidated after several years of nurturing. Although it cannot compare to the Nascent Souls of those old eccentrics, there shouldn’t be a problem if I refine the second Nascent Soul.” Han Li muttered to himself. Soon after, he slapped his storage pouch and summoned a jade box covered in talismans.

Han Li swept his sleeve with a stern expression and dispersed all the talismans from the box. He then pointed to the corner of the box and had it open by itself. As it slowly opened, it revealed a sparkling golden sphere that sealed the Wood Spirit Nascent within it.

“The Soulfade Technique that I placed on it is almost complete.” Han Li muttered to himself. Then after a moment of thought, his raised his hand and reached out towards the golden sphere.

In a clap of thunder, golden light flickered and countless arcs of lightning shot out from the lightning sphere. The lightning quickly flew into Han Li’s hand and disappeared without a trace. In the blink of an eye, the sphere disappeared to reveal a small green figure several inches tall with a delicate appearance. It was the Wood Spirit Nascent.

But at the moment, the Wood Spirit Nascent was densely covered in jet-black needles and its eyes were shut as if it were sleeping. The fine black needles would occasionally flicker with green light in a rather strange display.

Han Li didn’t dare to be careless as he carefully examined the Wood Spirit Nascent and jet-black needles once through. When it appeared that everything was as expected, he slowly extended his index finger towards the forehead of the Wood Spirit Nascent.

Before he fully extended the finger, a bean-sized ball of green light burst from his fingertip and transformed into a green thread of light. Han Li’s hand remained still as the thread pierced into the

Nascent Soul's forehead, reading the internal circumstances of the Nascent Soul. After the time it took to finish a meal, Han Li sighed and withdrew his finger, recalling the green thread as well.

Han Li stroked his chin as he pondered over his next actions. Suddenly, he waved his hand and the needles surrounding the Wood Spirit Nascent flew into his sleeve. As a result, the Wood Spirit Nascent remained inside the wooden box, still entirely unconscious.

Having already decided what to do, he formed a strange incantation gesture with his hands and struck the Wood Spirit Nascent with a spell seal. The Wood Spirit Nascent floated from the jade box and reached the height of Han Li's head. It then sat cross-legged across from Han Li who shut his eyes and gave a command. An azure light shined from the top of his head, manifesting his Nascent Soul once more. This time, the Nascent Soul did not appear as happy as it was before. Instead, its expression was taut and solemn.

It raised its head to glance at the Wood Spirit Nascent floating across from it. Its figure then blurred as it approached the Wood Spirit Nascent that sat cross-legged.

The Wood Spirit Nascent was only two inches tall, an inch shorter than Han Li's Nascent Soul. When the two stood side by side, they appeared at odds.

But at that moment, Han Li's Nascent Soul began to utter a cryptic incantation before shooting a ball of azure spirit essence directly onto the face of the Wood Spirit Nascent. The spirit Nascent's expression stirred and it slowly opened its eyes. However, its expression was dull and its eyes were lifeless as if it were a puppet.

Han Li's Nascent Soul appeared as if it were facing a great enemy. It quickly formed incantation gestures and glared at the Wood Spirit Nascent with wide eyes. In that moment, two beams of azure

light shot out of the Nascent Soul's eyes and directly entered the eyes of the Wood Spirit Nascent across from it.

Suddenly, the two figures shook and the Wood Spirit Nascent screamed in pain before dropping from the sky and rolling on the floor as if suffering from immense pain. At that same moment, Han Li's Nascent Soul floated in the air and also wore a pained expression on its face, but it was still able to forcefully retain control.

The painful screams from within the room intermittently appeared throughout the entire day before eventually disappearing. Two days later, Han Li walked out from the room with a tired face, but a trace of excitement was betrayed from his eyes.

In the past, he was scared of the potential backlash from invading the Wood Spirit Nascent's consciousness. As a result, he didn't immediately cast the techniques to establish a second Nascent Soul and instead used the Soulfade technique from the Profound Yin Arts and the Fading Needles to weaken the Wood Spirit Nascent.

After being weakened for such a long period of time, the Wood Spirit Nascent's consciousness was now completely weakened. Under such circumstances, Han Li was able to easily erase the last trace of its consciousness with his immensely powerful spiritual sense.

With the Wood Spirit Nascent's consciousness erased, he poured a fragment of his spiritual sense into it and used the secret technique to assimilate the Nascent Soul as his own.

Although it was said that there was a danger of backlash during assimilation, Han Li had a powerful grasp over his spiritual sense and wasn't likely to suffer a problem in this regard. And if something did happen, he would only have to abandon the fragment of his spiritual sense at most. Given how powerful his spiritual sense was, the loss wouldn't cause him much harm.

As for the duration of the assimilation process, it would take anywhere from three to eight years, or ten if he were unlucky. Han Li didn't believe that the second Nascent Soul would be usable during his time in Devilfall Valley in the first place, so he wasn't worried about the delay.

After leaving the sealed room, Han Li rested for a day and went to purchase some tool refinement materials from the market city. Afterwards, he stayed in the tool refinement room for half a month, crafting a dozen variously-sized silver stakes. He then brought them to the mountain next to the swamp where the Snowcloud Foxes dwelled.

When Han Li arrived at the stone room at the center of the mountain, he stared at the Cadaver Demon laying on the stone platform. Although he had expected this, he still felt some relief.

He took out a jade box from his storage pouch that was sealed with a golden talisman and then took out the silver stakes one by one as he watched the reclining Cadaver Demon.

# Chapter 794: Sovereign Devil Corpse

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The Cadaver Demon didn't appear any different from when he last saw it. There was green fur on its body and it was completely bound in silver chains, not to mention that it still only had a single arm.

Han Li took the time to carefully examine the entire stone room once through. After recognizing that it was exactly the same as he had left it, he felt at ease and tossed a jade box onto the floor. He then slapped a spirit beast pouch at his waist and summoned a streak of black light before him.

The Weeping Soul Beast had just appeared in its miniature foot-tall form. As soon as the beast appeared, it immediately saw the Cadaver Demon lying down on the stone platform and began to howl. Before Han Li even gave a command, its entire body glowed in black light and it expanded. Fortunately, the beast knew the area was narrow and only grew to a height of three meters, but it still stared at the Cadaver Demon with excitement nevertheless.

Han Li frowned at this, but while he sank into thought, the Weeping Soul Beast soon calmed down and crouched on the ground in an obedient manner.

“Yi!” When Han Li saw the back of the Weeping Soul Beast, a baffled expression appeared on his face.

The image of the blood ghost on the back of the Weeping Soul Beast was far clearer than before. The ghostly image even began to protrude from its back as if it were alive, much to Han Li’s excitement. It seemed that the last two feasts for the Weeping Soul Beast were almost enough for it to undergo another strange transformation.

A trace of anticipation accompanied Han Li’s surprise, but now was not the time to closely examine the Weeping Soul Beast. The only reason he had released it right now was to protect against any

surprises from the Cadaver Demon. Han Li slapped his storage pouch and summoned an antique jade stick into his hand with a flash of yellow light.

Han Li glanced at the jade stick with a raised brow. The item was a hair ornament that he had acquired from the black-robed youth's corpse after searching through his consciousness. The ornament contained over ten different methods for refining corpses. These methods were something the Yin Sifting Sect had acquired after stealthily fighting for them with other sects.

As for this specific Yin Sifting Sect Elder, he turned out to be particularly knowledgeable about the methods for refining corpses. These dozen corpse refinement methods were all things that came from his own understanding. There were even some alterations that he had made that increased the might of a refined corpse.

However, it was a pity that he had never shared these methods with his fellow sect members. He had always wished to refine a few top-grade corpses to run amok with, but he had never found any suitable corpses to refine.

One of the methods he recorded mentioned the Sovereign Devil Corpse, a top-grade corpse the black-robed youth had always wanted to refine. This method required a ferocious corpse that possessed an intelligence of its own as an ingredient. After erasing the consciousness of the corpse, one would use many kinds of secret techniques to refine it, hopefully turning it into a Sovereign Devil Corpse. Naturally, the resulting power would be even greater than that of other intelligent corpses.

According to what was recorded, it was one of the most optimal methods for refining the Cadaver Demon. Once refined, the ferocity of this naturally formed corpse would become even stronger. As a result, Han Li immediately thought of the Cadaver Demon once he read through this technique. This was a prime opportunity that he couldn't let slip by.

But before Han Li could refine it, he needed to erase the Cadaver Demon's consciousness just like with the Wood Spirit Nascent. As a result, he had taken out the jade box that contained the Cadaver Demon's primal soul.

Han Li looked at the silver stakes in front of him and waved at them, causing the stakes to float into the air. Then with an incantation, they began to glow with a faintly silver light. Next, he rolled his hands together, summoning several arcs of golden lightning from between his palms. Thunder roared with the appearance of the astonishing golden light.

Han Li then expressionlessly raised his hands, shooting out over ten fine arcs of lightning, striking each of the dozen stakes. As golden and silver light intertwined, the stakes trembled.

When Han Li saw this, his expression sank before uttering the word, "Go," and striking the stakes with a spell seal. All of the stakes immediately shot out as streaks of silver, quickly surrounding the Cadaver Demon on the platform. They were all aimed at the vital points and limbs of its body, in preparation to strike.

With all of this done, Han Li took a deep breath and looked at the jade box in front of him that was still sealed with a golden talisman. He then opened his mouth and azure light shot, engulfing the jade box. The golden talisman trembled several times and eventually floated off the surface of the box.

Woosh. The jade box immediately flew ten meters forward as if it was struck. Han Li's pupils contracted as he watched, his lips tightly closed.

A dense green fog suddenly roiled out from the box and a wild laughter sounded from it. "I am finally freed! Who was the fool that released me? Since you've freed me, I'll be consuming your flesh. Yi, a Nascent Soul cultivator?!"

The green mist condensed to form a woman's face, exactly the

same as Silvermoon's human form apart from the fearsome green light glowing from her eyes. She appeared stunned upon seeing Han Li.

Han Li was also surprised to see such a familiar face, but soon all emotion disappeared from his face. The transformation of Silvermoon's demon fox body had been something that the Cadaver Demon originally created, so this appearance was to be expected from the primal soul of the Cadaver Demon.

The green ghost face was stunned for a moment before coldly laughing. She opened her mouth and blew out strong Yin winds. The ghost face soon grew three meters tall and it charged towards Han Li in an attempt to enter his body. However, Han Li had already prepared for this. No matter how powerful the Cadaver Demon had been when it was alive, Han Li had no fear of it since it was now just a primal soul that had been trapped for many years.

As he watched all of this happen, a cold glint flickered in his eye. Without receiving an order, the Weeping Soul Beast snorted and shot out a mist of yellow light. The light swept past half of the ghost face and immediately prevented it from moving.

"What's this?" In a display of quick wits, the ghost face felt that something was amiss and struggled to break free. But unfortunately for it, the Weeping Soul Beast's ability was specialized in restraining souls. Not only was the ghost face unable to escape, it was also slowly being absorbed by the mist of yellow light.

The ghost face was now filled with fear, but in a display of decisiveness, the green mist violently swayed and split off the portion of it that was trapped in the yellow mist of light. It then took advantage of this opening to roil and form a smaller ghost face.

At the same time, it hastily turned around and shot towards the Cadaver Demon at the center of the stone platform. Knowing that

Han Li couldn't be trifled with, it planned to return to its original body and then tear Han Li apart.

Han Li smirked upon seeing this. He calmly pointed to the ten or so stakes revolving around the Cadaver Demon, and they fell upon it as quick as lightning the moment the ghost face entered the Cadaver Demon's body.

With gusts of wind, the Cadaver Demon suddenly found all of its vitals and limbs had been struck by the silver stakes. Although its limbs were incredibly hard and hadn't been harmed by the silver stakes, the golden lightning from the stakes attacked without compromise, instantly forming a golden net around the Cadaver Demon.

Suddenly, a fishy scent filled the air from the direction of the Cadaver Demon's body. Just as the Cadaver Demon's primal soul had entered its body, the stakes had actually knocked it back out. Green ghost mist then surrounded the body where a large and a small ghost face could be faintly seen inside the mist.

The two ghost faces were doing their utmost to enter the body of the Cadaver Demon's body. However, the golden arcs of lightning sparking off the silver stakes warded them off, each strike resulting in a pained scream.

"As expected, there was a fragment of consciousness hidden inside the body. It seems these preparations wasn't done in vain." Han Li appeared delighted at the sight of this. With his last trace of worry now resolved, he promptly commanded the Weeping Soul Beast. It instantly snorted, puffing out two mists of golden lights towards the ghost faces, both far brighter than the one from before.

The two ghost faces weren't as lucky as they were before. When the mists of yellow light swept over, the two ghost faces released cold screams before being swept into the Weeping Soul Beast's mouth.

The Weeping Soul Beast swallowed several times and pounded its chest with excitement while appearing quite satisfied.

Han Li smiled at the sight of this and returned his gaze to the silver stakes. He then walked towards the Cadaver Demon's body.

When Han Li arrived at the stone platform, he looked at the silver chains surrounding the Cadaver Demon. Then after a moment of thought, he flicked his finger and chopped at them with a golden swordstreak. With a loud ring, the silver chains remained unharmed.

Han Li appeared to have anticipated this and spat a small golden sword from his mouth. With a hand seal command, the small sword glowed with brilliant light and silently streaked past the chain. With a brittle clang and a flash of golden light, a rice-sized hole appeared through the chain.

Han Li's expression stirred. Although he knew that the silver chain was extraordinarily strong for it to be able to restrain the Cadaver Demon, it was still greatly surprising that the Auric Essence-infused Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords were only able to harm it to this degree.

During his amazement, Han Li continued casting incantation seals from his hands and ordered the flying sword to continue striking the same location on the chain.

Only after a long while was the silver chains eventually severed by Han Li. He then curiously beckoned to the two pieces of cut silver chain and it marvelously slid off the Cadaver Demon's body as if it were a snake and flew into Han Li's hand.

After stroking the silver chains in his hands, he discovered that its surface was exceptionally smooth and was densely covered in small talisman characters. There were so small that they could barely be seen by the human eye.

Han Li's expression stirred, shock appearing in his eyes.

# Chapter 795: Before the Journey

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Such tiny talisman characters weren't something that could be created in the current cultivation world in the Heavenly South. That meant this chain was an extremely rare ancient treasure.

With that thought, silver light flashed from his hands and the cut pieces of silver chain were withdrawn into his storage pouch. When he had the time later, he planned on seeing whether or not he could restore the chain and test their might.

With the silver chain gone, he lowered his head to look down at the Cadaver Demon's sinister body. His expression grew sullen and he flicked his fingers, piercing several parts of the Cadaver Demon's body with azure threads. Han Li then began to examine it, revealing an expression of satisfaction afterwards.

Apart from the missing arm, the Cadaver Demon was ideal for a refined corpse. Not only was its body incredibly formidable to the point where common magic treasure couldn't harm it in the slightest, but just a small amount of the corpse fire and poison that it produced could immediately kill a cultivator.

But when he looked at the Cadaver Demon's destroyed arm, a thought appeared in Han Li's mind. He slapped a spirit beast pouch at his waist and released a swarm of black-tainted Gold Devouring Beetles. They loudly buzzed as they circled around his head before he raised his hand and struck them with a spell seal. Then with a mental command, the beetles condensed around the corpse demon's missing arm. A moment later, a new black, silver, and gold arm appeared in the gap. Apart from the color contrasting with the green fur on the rest of its body, it appeared exactly the same as its other arm.

Han Li smiled, revealing a trace of satisfaction.

In the following moments, he took out several formation flags and formation discs and arranged them in a profound spell

formation.

...

After spending two months at the center of the mountain, Han Li returned to his cave residence. His face was extremely pale as if he had exhausted much of his vitality. After Silvermoon greeted him, he wordlessly secluded himself in a hidden room and didn't mention anything about the Cadaver Demon.

After a month, the large door opened once more and Han Li calmly walked out from the room.

Standing guard outside his room, Silvermoon respectfully said, "Master, the Six-winged Frost Centipedes have already begun to hatch in the insect room."

Han Li smiled upon hearing her and said, "Let's go and have a look then." Soon after, he quickly made his way to the insect room with Silvermoon following him in an elegant motion.

Han Li opened the restrictions guarding the way to the insect room and clearly saw what laid within. The newly hatched Six-winged Frost Centipedes were larger than the first generation and the glacial Qi they breathed was far stronger than before.

Although it wasn't comparable to the Celestial Ice Flames, it would still be fatal to cultivators at the Core Formation stage. Of course, when fused into the Purple Apex Flames, they became far more deadly.

The eggs of the Six-winged Frost Centipedes shined with black light at the center of the insect room. They were fist-sized and surrounded by three-meter-wide chunks of ice. The ice Qi pervading the room clearly originated from these eggs.

Han Li swept his gaze across the room. The huge centipedes seemed to have sensed something and raised their heads, snarling in the direction of the stone door as if they felt threatened. With a changed expression, Han Li glanced down at the insect eggs and

closely examined them.

After counting the number of eggs, Han Li nodded and said, “There are twenty-four eggs, enough to use. Silvermoon, call for my in-name disciple to come over and tell her she can take her centipedes.”

“Yes, I will send the voice transmission talisman.” Silvermoon agreed and took out a talisman. After whispering a few words into it, she tossed it into the air and it flew off in a streak of red light.

Finished with the centipede eggs, Han Li turned his attention to the Gold Devouring Beetles in the next room. Because the green liquid had been prioritized for the Six-winged Frost Centipedes, Han Li hadn’t paid much attention to his specifically selected Gold Devouring Beetles.

There were no changes to the beetles in the room. They were still concentrated in a huge golden ball, suspended on a spirit tree that Han Li had specifically planted there.

Although he had anticipated this, Han Li still frowned at the sight. When those flying beetles evolved once more, they could be considered fully mature. Even with the acceleration from the Rainbow Skirt Grass, the long process of their evolution was nearly unbearable. Han Li hadn’t thought that in a mere several tens of years, the Gold Devouring Beetles would finally reach the last stage of maturation.

Han Li withdrew his gaze from the insect room and asked, “Silvermoon, how is the Profound Goddess Palm? It’s been several months. That should be enough to tell if it can be saved.”

Silvermoon replied with hesitation, “It’s... hard to say. It would be better if Master took a look personally.”

“What could be hard to say?” Han Li appeared puzzled. But after a moment of thought, he ordered Silvermoon to take him to the medicine garden.

A trace of astonishment appeared in Han Li's eyes when he saw the stalkroot of the Profound Goddess Palm. Its original faint yellow color was turning green, but it was still bare and small, without any hint of emerging buds.

"How can this be? Is the plant alive or dead?" Contrary to what he saw, Han Li didn't sense any aura of life from it.

Silvermoon sighed and slowly said, "This was what I wished to tell Master. The Profound Goddess Palm's root was watered several times by the green liquid without any change. It was only after using both the Myriad Year Spirit Milk combined with the Wine Nectar that I was able to change its color."

"I originally believed it was brought back to life, but apart from the change in color, it's exactly the same. The green liquid also had no effect on it. As a result, I was left with my hands tied. It's unknown whether the Profound Goddess Palm root is actually alive or dead."

Looking at the Profound Goddess Palm root, Han Li indifferently said, "Since it reacted, there is still a chance of reviving it. We simply need to find another method, but now is not the time to continue experimenting with it. We'll have to settle our affairs in the Far West first. It is about time for us to leave."

"We're going now?" Silvermoon asked.

Han Li firmly replied, "We're leaving tomorrow. In a moment, I am going to bid farewell to Senior Martial Brother Cheng. Afterwards, I will seal my cave residence and take the most important items. The Far West shouldn't have any formidable high-grade cultivators, so it shouldn't prove very dangerous, just time consuming. Also, we must make it back within three years, or we'll miss the prime window to enter Devilfall Valley."

Silvermoon nodded after he finished speaking.

Soon, the two left the medicine garden. As Han Li left to see his

Senior Martial Brother Cheng, Silvermoon was left behind in the cave residence to put it in order for their departure the next day.

The next morning, Han Li brought Silvermoon out of the cave residence to discover there was a beautiful woman of graceful stature waiting outside for Han Li.

A trace of surprise appeared in his eyes as he asked, “What is it? Didn’t I give you enough medicine pills to last you for several years of peaceful cultivation?”

Mu Peiling lowered her head and whispered, “My Lord, after some thought, I’ve decided it may be better for me to go on this journey with you since my cultivation has reached a bottleneck. As your concubine, serving my Lord is only natural. Will you bring me?” Her beautiful appearance was capable of arousing a feeling of great adoration.

When Han Li heard her, he gave her an appraising look and pondered to himself for a moment. As Silvermoon stood behind him, her eyes wandered and she mysteriously smiled.

Not long after, Han Li nodded and said, “Since you wish to go, then so be it. On the way, I can give you some guidance on cultivation. The sooner you can reach Core Formation stage, the better it will be for me.”

“Many thanks, my Lord!” Mu Peiling was overjoyed upon hearing this and wore an expression of excitement.

When Han Li saw this, he smiled and flung his sleeve, releasing the Wind Riding Chariot in a streak of white light. When Silvermoon saw the carriage, she giggled and entered Han Li’s sleeve in a blur.

When Mu Peiling saw this, her jaw dropped in shock.

Han Li paid this no mind and calmly said, “I’ll talk to you about Silvermoon on the way. Let’s head out first!”

“Yes, my Lord!” Mu Peiling quickly restored her calm and made

her way toward the carriage with lithe steps.

Just as she stepped inside, Han Li entered the carriage in an azure blur. He formed a hand incantation and a layer of white light suddenly covered the flying carriage. Then with a clear ring, the Wind Riding Chariot streaked across the sky and disappeared from sight.

Not long after, some information began to spread in the Drifting Cloud Sect that their Elder Han had suffered a slight loss in vitality as a result of a confrontation with a devil cultivator, and would be secluding himself for several years to restore his cultivation.

When the two other sects in the Dreamcloud Mountains heard this, they sent several people to inquire about the state of Han Li's injuries, but Elder Cheng didn't give them a concrete answer. The cultivators that were friends of the Drifting Cloud Sect were also denied an answer over the matter.

Thus, news that the newly famous Elder Han of the Drifting Cloud Sect had sustained heavy injuries quickly spread throughout the State of Xi and through the sects of neighboring countries. The cultivators of these sects didn't suspect this news in the slightest. After all, the last devil cultivator that injured him was an elder of the Jin Empire's Yin Sifting Sect that was rumored to be at the peak of mid-Nascent Soul stage. It was no surprise that killing him would result in a large loss in vitality. But even so, Han Li quickly became viewed as a vastly powerful cultivator who stood on par with Eccentric Heavenvenge.

Likewise, the fame of the Drifting Cloud Sect rose rapidly alongside him and there were few sects that didn't begin trying to befriend the sect. There were even a few vagrant cultivators with profound cultivation that came to the Dreamcloud Mountains to enter the Drifting Cloud Sect.

In a short amount of time, the Drifting Cloud Sect gained a faint standing of the top sect in the State of Xi. Many Drifting Cloud Sect

disciples grew excited about their mysterious Elder Han and he rose to be their most well-regarded idol for a time.

# Chapter 796: The Devilfall Domain

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The Heavenly South Continent's State of Dongyu is one of the few rare countries that didn't belong to any of the Continent's four superpowers. This wasn't because the country was too small or that it was lacking in resources. Rather, the country's size and wealth of cultivation resources placed it among the top ten countries in the Heavenly South.

The reason why the State of Dongyu was unaffiliated with any of the four superpowers was due to its location.

Apart from the Nine Nations Union who was too far away, the country shared a close border at the center of the three other superpowers.

As for the country's cultivator sects, their histories and affiliations were varied as well. There were Righteous and Devil Dao sects as well as a few small leisurely sects. But most important of all were the native sects that couldn't be suppressed by any other power. They became the deciding factor that prevented the State of Dongyu from being influenced by the other superpowers.

None of the three neighbouring superpowers wished to relinquish control of the country and they continuously conducted their own maneuvers, both covert and open, but to little effect. In the end, there was only a vague agreement between the three superpowers that they would not interfere with the country and had the State of Dongyu become a neutral territory.

Of course, the various native sects of the country had secretly received backing from the three superpowers, forcibly maintaining a balance of power. This led to various cultivators gathering in this neutral country, causing it to flourish for some time.

In the State of Dongyu's northern Chang Province, there was a depression that took up two-thirds of its land. The majority of the depression was covered in dense forest, and there was an unbroken

mountain range that spanned tens of thousands of kilometers at its center, known as the Myriad Link Mountain Range by the locals.

No one truly knew if the mountain range consisted of ten thousand mountains, but it still had an abundance of demon beasts and rare medicines. However, no cultivators dare to rashly enter the mountains.

The Myriad Link Mountain Range was known by a far more sinister name in the Heavenly South cultivation world, the Devilfall Domain. And somewhere hidden in the mountain range lay the most dangerous area in the Heavenly South — Devilfall Valley.

Ever since Devilfall Valley came into existence, countless vastly powerful cultivators entered the valley in search of treasure, but the veil of mystery and death that surrounded it over the years prevented anyone from treading too closely.

Of course, its fearsome reputation alone hadn't stopped cultivators from extracting the mountain's resources. That was due to the miasma that would occasionally sweep across the mountains and seal it off for years at the time, perhaps as a result of Devilfall Valley's influence.

Not only was the miasma incredibly toxic, but it was also as thick as something produced by a spell formation and would cover the mountains in complete darkness. It was impossible to tell direction once inside.

Even if one could make it past the miasma, it was impossible to catch any demon beasts or pick any herbs. All one could do was stare at the mountains with envy or go to the few areas where the miasma was most thin.

But every fifty years or so, the miasma around the mountains would disappear and the spatial tears surrounding Devilfall Valley became more stable and sparse. During this time period, treasure hunters from all over the Heavenly South would gather for this

year-long opening to seek riches. With such a large mountain range, only a small portion of cultivators were able to reap the treasures despite how abundant the demon beasts and spirit medicines may be. Despite this, there would be thousands of cultivators that came during each opening.

Furthermore, there were a few merchants being backed by various clan powers nearby the mountain. They would create several temporary market cities in the area, prospering from the medicines and spirit beasts acquired within the mountains.

Recently, the miasma around the Devilfall Domain had already begun to grow thin and would soon disappear. It would be at least several more months before the miasma disappears, but there were several times more cultivators there than during the previous opening. Furthermore, a large number of high-grade cultivators had appeared amongst them, startling the local cultivator sects and clans.

The local powers hastily restricted their disciples from rashly going out and sent men to investigate the cause of it. As a result, they were stunned by what they found.

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On the top of some nameless hill on the border of the Chang Province, there was a Core Formation male-female pair that were standing side by side. The man was wearing dark blue robes and appeared to be thirty years of age with a scholarly appearance. The woman wore palace robes and her body was ample, but her face appeared unremarkable.

The couple appeared to be calm, but a trace of anxiousness was betrayed by their flickering eyes, exposing their true emotions.

After a moment, a silver light flickered from a distance, followed by the appearance of a silver streak shooting towards them. When the pair saw the streak of light, they appeared overjoyed.

The silver streak arrived above the small mountain and flew a circle around them before revealing an embroidered-robed scholarly man around the age of forty.

When the woman saw the scholarly man, she smiled and said, “Big Brother, you’ve finally arrived. How did it go? Did you manage to receive the command medallion to enter the valley?”

“Hehe. I’ve managed to acquire it right on time.” The scholarly man smiled and raised his hand as two streaks of azure light shot towards them.

The man and the woman quickly reached out their hands to receive the two bronze command medallions. They were both carved with the word “Devilfall” in red on one side, and with the same word written in gold on the other. There were traces of spiritual Qi emitted from the talisman. The woman immediately revealed a face of excitement, but the man frowned and appeared pensive.

The woman excitedly said, “This is great! With the Devilfall Medallion, we’ll be able to enter the valley in search of treasure. If we are able to find even a few spiritual medicines from the age of antiquity, we may find the opportunity to condense a Nascent Soul.”

Standing at the woman’s side, the blue-clothed man sighed and said, “Such a small pendant is actually worth over thirty thousand spirit stones. They actually dare to sell it at that price?” The three command medallions had cost them over a hundred thousand spirit stones. It took the entirety of the wealth they had gathered over several hundred years to obtain them. It was only natural for him to feel a bit of heartache over the matter.

The scholarly man helplessly said, “Second Brother, don’t feel too bad about it. If it weren’t for the friendship we forged with them and the lacking manpower of their sect, we definitely wouldn’t have had the opportunity to acquire these medallions

from them. Being able to purchase even a single command medallion for a hundred thousand spirit stones is something that many would fight over. Furthermore, the Ghost Spirit Sect originally planned on pursuing the treasures of Devilfall Valley by themselves. Now that the other sects are pressuring them, they have no other option but to allow outsiders to join them on the treasure expedition. Otherwise, the Ghost Spirit Sect wouldn't have agreed to allow us to enter the valley even if we gave them a hundred thousand spirit stones."

When the blue-clothed cultivator heard this, he wasn't able to say anything back. But when he looked at the command medallion in his hand, he worriedly asked, "However, can we trust the Ghost Spirit Sect's method of entering the valley? I heard that the valley's opening has many spatial tears. If one isn't careful, they wouldn't even leave any remains behind. There's also the news of the Ghost Spirit Sect Elder coming back from the valley alive. Does Elder Brother believe this to be true?"

The scholarly man promptly responded, "Apart from the fact that the Ghost Spirit Sect treats the entire Heavenly South cultivation world as an enemy, there should be no question over the matter. Furthermore, didn't we also hear that only the Ghost Spirit Sect elder's Nascent Soul made it out of Devilfall Valley? It sounds reasonable since his body met its end in the valley itself."

After listening to the scholarly man's explanation, he hesitantly said, "However, even if we can enter the valley, it's still extremely dangerous. Could it have been a mistake to buy these medallions to enter the valley?"

The woman snorted and carelessly said, "With our talents, we've already reached the peak of our realm. If we don't have any chance encounters, we will definitely perish in two hundred years. It is natural to take this opportunity when it presents itself to us. Also, I heard the spatial tears on the outer areas of Devilfall Valley are far less dangerous than those inside the depths. So long as we are

careful, it shouldn't pose too much danger."

The scholarly man calmly said, "I heard that the Ghost Spirit Sect had issued several hundred Devilfall Medallions. Furthermore, most of them were dropped into the hands of various sects. It is even said that a few Moulan spell warriors are participating and that the Ghost Spirit Sect are sending several hundred cultivators into the valley. With so many people inside, what do we have to fear?"

"Besides, if worst comes to worst, we can simply leave. But if we miss this opportunity, we will live the rest of our lives with regret." The woman at his side nodded at his words as if having deeply thought of the matter.

"Since Big Brother has said as such, this little brother will follow him into the valley." The blue-clothed man bitterly smiled and said nothing else.

As this was happening, various other movements occurred throughout the Chang Province.

...

Half a year ago, rumors began to spread that the Ghost Spirit Sect had acquired a method to enter Devilfall Valley and that they wished to conceal this information from other sects so they could monopolize the treasures of the valley. These rumors had caused a massive uproar throughout the continent.

The various Righteous Dao Sects and Heavenly Dao Sects wishing to recuperate from their war with the Moulan could no longer sit still so they each sent men to the Ghost Spirit Sect to ask over the matter. As for their fellow Devil Dao Sects, they also sent men to verify the truth of the matter.

The higher echelon of the Ghost Spirit Sect was enraged by this, but after being held under such scrutiny and pressure, they were forced to admit the truth. After all, so long as someone carefully

investigated the matter, traces of the truth would eventually be revealed. As a result, the other sects bluntly requested that they share the method to enter the valley, but the Ghost Spirit Sect had refused to agree for as long as they could. In the end, they could only compromise and issue a few command medallions to enter the valley to various sects.

So long as one possessed the medallion, the various sects would be able to send men together with the Ghost Spirit Sect cultivators into the valley when the spatial tears of Devilfall Valley stabilized. And naturally, each medallion came at a cost of spirit stones.

Of course, in order to prevent any resentment from vagrant cultivators, they set aside over a hundred medallions specifically for them and a few small sects.

Now that the time was drawing near, the Chang Province became incredibly lively. The vicinity of the Myriad Link Mountains became filled with cultivators from other countries, all hoping to enter Devilfall Valley in search of treasure. Needless to mention, they were all the cautious sort as well.

# Chapter 797: Han Lis Return

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The city nearest to the Chang Province was named Birchleaf City. It was thousands of kilometers from the Myriad Link Mountains, but there were cultivators unwilling to sleep outside and they decided to sleep in the city instead. This had scared off the small sect originally occupying the city and made them flee back to the sect's mountain.

Although there were many cultivators gathering there, there were many inns in the city as well. There were no problems for them finding accommodations.

Among these inns, was a somewhat mediocre one by the name of the Good Fortune Tavern. There were two groups of cultivators checked in there, with each one staying in a different wing of the courtyard.

In one of the rooms, there were three people sitting around a wooden table and discussing something. These three were all young and beautiful female cultivators. They were Violet Spirit and Mei Ning, who Han Li had last seen at Skyfirst City, and the third woman was the white-robed woman surnamed Song.

At the moment, Violet Spirit was concealing her true appearance under the guise of a common female cultivator with only a slight beauty.

The three were softly discussing something with a serious expression. The walls around them glowed with white light as if under a restriction that prevented them from being eavesdropped on.

Violet Spirit frowned and asked with a worried tone, "Big Sister Song, you still haven't received word from Brother Han? It won't be long before the miasma clears entirely. If Brother Han doesn't appear, we will miss the best time to enter Devilfall Valley."

Cultivator Song smiled and said, “Little Sister Violet Spirit, you might not know this, but despite Martial Senior Cheng’s proclamation that Martial Uncle Han had suffered injuries, I had learned in truth that he actually journeyed to the Far West. Although I don’t know what business he has there, the journey there and back should take a year at the very least. He won’t be returning here in a hurry. Besides, there are still several months left. I’ve left behind the location for where to contact us back at the sect. Once he returns, he will immediately seek us out. We just have to hope that he arrives on time. It’s not as if there are cultivators in the Far West that can hold down Martial Uncle Han Li.”

Reminded of the matter of the Umbra Realm, Violet Spirit couldn’t help but say, “That is hard to say. Even if Fellow Daoist Han’s cultivation is profound, there are matters that can’t be resolved with a powerful cultivation.” Then with a flicker of her eyes, she continued, “Big Sister Song, now that you’ve mentioned Martial Uncle Han, it seems you now speak of Brother Han with great respect. When you spoke of him before, you didn’t hold him in such high esteem.” With that said, Violet Spirit wore a mysterious smile.

Cultivator Song faintly blushed but she soon regained her calm. “If Little Violet Spirit is also capable of slaying a cultivator at the peak of mid-Nascent Soul stage, I would also hold you in high regard. Senior Martial Uncle Han is now on par with the three great cultivators of the Heavenly South. As his Junior, is it strange for me to speak of him with respect?”

Violet Spirit giggled and said, “This is only natural. It came as shock to me when I heard of his accomplishments. Ten years ago, he was still only a Core Formation cultivator like us, but now, he possesses astonishing abilities worthy of our admiration. It is hard to believe. Had we known this earlier, it would’ve been better to force him to take Little Sister Mei as a concubine. That would’ve

guaranteed Little Sister Mei Ning a stable path of cultivation.”

When Mei Ning heard this, she blushed, but she only snorted and said nothing else. A trace of sadness appeared in her eyes. Han Li had given her the choice, but it was a pity she had hesitated. With Han Li being the giant figure he was now, she could no longer easily mention the matter.

“Mei Ning nearly became Martial Uncle Han’s concubine? This is the first time I’ve heard of this.” After a moment’s pause, Cultivator Song smiled and turned to Violet Spirit. “I’ve always believed there was some kind of relationship between Little Sister Violet Spirit and Martial Uncle Han. After all, your beauty is otherworldly. It is hard to believe that there is a man able to resist your charms.”

Violet Spirit snorted and said, “Had I known at the time that Fellow Daoist Han would later possess such powerful abilities, I might’ve devoted myself to him. Had I become his Dao Companion my cultivation would be making far greater progress than now.” She curled her lips to form a mysterious smile, hiding whether or not she was joking. This led to Cultivator Song feeling at a loss as to whether or not she should cry.

After a moment’s hesitation, Violet Spirit deliberately said, “If Brother Han truly agrees to help us, we’ll be able to smoothly acquire the Spirit Kindle Fruit, given his vast abilities. Big Sister Song, are you certain that you will not be entering Devilfall Valley? Mei Ning also doesn’t wish to go because of the sudden rise of cultivators entering the valley. With her cultivation, it will too difficult for her.”

With a moment of thought, Cultivator Song earnestly replied, “I’ve put much thought into it, but I’m different from the two of you. Although I am only at the early Core Formation stage, I am only a step away from the next level. It isn’t worth it for me to brave such great dangers. As for the treasures of the valley, I am not willing to exchange my life for them. I know my limits.”

“Since Big Sister Song has already decided, I won’t persuade you. In truth, if Fellow Daoist Han doesn’t arrive on time, I will not be heading into the valley alone. With so many high-grade cultivators coming along, the danger will be greatly increased and killing for treasures won’t be an uncommon affair.

“If an early Core Formation cultivator like me were to enter, that’s just asking for trouble. My mind isn’t that muddled.” Violet Spirit bitterly smiled and spoke with a dejected tone, leaving Mei Ning and Cultivator Song stunned.

With a strange expression on her face, Cultivator Song muttered, “I didn’t expect for the Ghost Spirit Sect’s plans to be leaked out. At the start, I believed that Little Sister Violet Spirit had leaked the information and planned to take advantage of the chaos.”

In a display of feigned anger, Violet Spirit bluntly said, “Take advantage of the chaos? How could I do that? Naturally, the fewer cultivators that enter the valley, the better. It is only under those circumstances that we are able to forcibly catch the Ghost Spirit Sect off guard and pick the Spirit Kindle Fruit.”

Suddenly, a familiar man’s voice appeared outside the room, “Oh? So it wasn’t Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit that spread the information? It seems to be the doing of someone else.”

“Martial Uncle Han!”

“Brother Han!”

Violet Spirit and Cultivator Song immediately recognized his voice and shouted out his name with pleasant surprise.

Violet Spirit raised her hand and struck the door with a spell seal. In a flash of white light, the door slowly opened.

There was a youth in his twenties standing there with his hands held behind his back, wearing half-worn out clothes. He looked at the three women with a slight smile on his face. It was Han Li who had returned from the Far West after spending two years there. He

was carrying a foot-long yellow bamboo tube behind his back that was slung there as if he didn't have the mind to keep it in a storage pouch.

After some careful examination, Han Li appeared somewhat different from before. His bearing and temperament seemed to have undergone a significant change. He appeared even more unwavering and collected so that it gave people an unfathomable impression.

Without further thought, Cultivator Song hastily stepped forward and gave him a curtsy, respectfully saying, "I pay my respects to Martial Uncle Han!"

"Brother Han, you've finally arrived. I was starting to think that something had occupied you and you wouldn't be able to make it on time!" As if flustered, Violet Spirit stood up with a trace of a blush on her face. It was unknown how long ago Han Li had arrived. Could it be that he had heard the entire conversation?

When she recalled saying that she would've devoted herself to him, she couldn't help but reveal a trace of embarrassment in spite of her quick wit and relaxed manner.

"Since I've made an agreement with you, it is only natural to come on time." Han Li smiled and took a deep look at her before calmly entering the room.

Mei Ning bit her lip and gave Han Li a salute. He waved his hand and had her stop before taking an empty seat by the table.

Violet Spirit quickly regained her calm and sat back down. As for Cultivator Song, she hesitated before sitting back down.

Leaving the matter of Devilfall Valley for later, Violet Spirit asked, "Brother Han, when did you return to the Heavenly South? Was your journey to the Far West smooth?" She then reexamined him with an odd gaze.

Han Li smiled and said, "I encountered a few small problems in

the Far West. Although they were resolved smoothly, it had taken up a bit of time. Else, I would've returned half a year ago.”

Violet Spirit and Cultivator Song couldn't help but look at each other, curiosity filling their hearts. A small problem for the current Han Li couldn't have been a small matter. But so long as Han Li didn't want to talk about it, the two would not pursue the topic as a matter of shrewdness.

“Earlier I heard that only Lady Violet Spirit wishes to enter Devilfall Valley.” Han Li turned his gaze to the other two women and calmly asked, “Martial Uncle, Martial Niece Song, Mei Ning, have you already made up your minds over the matter?”

“Since Martial Uncle already knows this, Martial Niece won't conceal it. After some thought and discussion, Fellow Daoist Mei Ning and I both feel that this journey will be too dangerous, so it'd be better for us to not go. I don't wish to risk my life over saving thirty years of cultivation. And not long before, Fellow Daoist Mei Ning acquired a medicine pill that will benefit her Core Formation. She also doesn't wish to put herself in danger. Devilfall Valley's title as the most dangerous area in the Heavenly South isn't something to scoff at. And since the Spirit Kindle Fruit is in the depths of the valley, the risk is even greater.”

# Chapter 798: The Monarch of Soul Divergence

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Having heard Cultivator Song's careful words, Han Li nodded and didn't ask any further questions about the matter.

"It is good that Martial Niece Song and Lady Mei don't go. There are undoubtedly villains lurking in the Myriad Link Mountains. Even if I enter Devilfall Valley, I may not return alive. Lady Violet Spirit, are you still set on entering the valley?" Han Li asked with a casual tone.

With a smile, Violet Spirit calmly said, "So long as Brother Han is willing to enter the valley, I am willing to brave the risk. I hold Fellow Daoist Han in complete confidence."

Han Li stared at Violet Spirit and said, "Since Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit has said this, I won't try to persuade you otherwise. But before we enter the valley, there are several matters I must first make clear."

Violet Spirit replied without surprise, "This is as it should be. If Brother Han has any questions, please do not hesitate to ask."

"First of all, I need to confirm whether or not the matter of the Spirit Kindle Fruit is true." Han Li's expression grew solemn. "I don't want to enter Devilfall Valley in high hopes only to discover that it didn't exist. I hope Lady Violet Spirit can confirm this for me?"

Violet Spirit was already prepared for Han Li's question and she immediately fished out a green jade slip and handed it over to Han Li. "The Spirit Kindle Fruit is real. The Ghost Spirit Sect's Nascent Soul that managed to escape from Devilfall Valley by a fluke had spoken of its existence. Why else would a Ghost Spirit Sect Nascent Soul elder strive their hardest to brave the danger of Devilfall Valley?"

Han Li took the jade slip and submerged his spiritual sense into it and silently looked through it. A moment later, he withdrew his spiritual sense and expressionlessly returned the jade slip. Han Li frowned and hesitantly said, “According to what is said, the Spirit Kindle Fruit does exist. However, it is located deep in the depths of Devilfall Valley and its precise location is somewhat unclear. It will be difficult to find the Spirit Kindle Fruit with this information alone.”

Violet Spirit explained as if in fear that Han Li would back down, “Because the Ghost Spirit Elder had accidentally stumbled across the Spirit Kindle Fruit after manifesting his Nascent Soul, he couldn’t remember its precise location. However, he also noted several notable facts about its location. It shouldn’t be too much of a problem to find it.”

When Han Li recalled the details inside the jade slip, he pondered, weighing the potential risks and gains.

A moment later, Han Li raised his head and calmly asked, “Even if we find the Spirit Kindle Fruit, won’t we need to refine it inside the valley because it would quickly lose its medicinal power? Has Lady Violet Spirit finished preparing the supplementary pill ingredients?”

Violet Spirit was overjoyed at his response, but she promptly suppressed her excitement. With a bright expression, she said, “The supplementary ingredients for the Nature Origin Pill aren’t easy to find, but I’ve managed to piece them together over the past few years. So long as we have the Spirit Kindle Fruit and our luck doesn’t take a turn for the worse, there shouldn’t be a problem with refining the Nature Origin Pills.”

Han Li’s face turned grim and he emotionlessly said, “Since it shouldn’t be difficult to find, I will make an attempt. But Lady Violet Spirit, you should know of the dangers of Devilfall Valley. I will make an effort to protect you inside, but be warned that if I encounter a danger that even I cannot withstand, you must be

prepared to defend yourself.”

“This is natural. If something truly happens to me, I will not hold it against Brother Han. Besides, I am quite confident in my ability to survive.” Violet Spirit replied without any hesitation, the soft lines of her face replaced with staunch resolution.

Han Li’s expression relaxed as these words were much to his satisfaction. “Can you three Fellow Daoists inquire on how the Ghost Spirit Sect will be entering the valley? When I arrived, I heard that the Ghost Spirit Sect are issuing Devilfall Medallions to restrict the number of people that can enter the valley. It seems strange. Under such circumstances, there is no difference whether a few hundred or a few thousand cultivators enter the valley. Yet there seems to be a limitation on how many people may enter. Otherwise, the Ghost Spirit Sect would definitely capitalize on this opportunity as they’re selling each Devilfall Medallion for several tens of thousands of spirit stones.”

After a moment of surprise, Violet Spirit smiled and said, “As expected, Brother Han is quite discerning. You’ve just about guessed the truth. Although Mei Ning and I haven’t managed to acquire the specifics of the method to enter the valley, we’ve faintly discovered from our source, that Ghost Spirit Sect disciple, the method of entry requires the power of many Ghost Spirit Sect disciples as well as a large quantity of spirit stones to enter to valley at a specific time. It does seem that the number of people that can enter the valley is limited.”

“Regardless of the method to enter the valley, our Drifting Cloud Sect has been given three Devilfall Medallions and I acquired one when I had returned to the sect. There should be no problem entering the valley for me, but the depths are a different matter. I have no certainty of making it out safely. I believe that the majority of cultivators will be staying on the outer reaches of the valley and search for their treasure there. Only Nascent Soul cultivators would dare to enter the depths. Naturally, there will be

Core Formation cultivators that will wish to fight one another, but there shouldn't be too many. Fellow Daoist Violet Spirit shouldn't experience too many dangers in the outer valley and should be able to handle herself there. As for when we enter the inner valley..." Han Li's eyes flickered and he continued speaking to her through voice transmissions.

When Cultivator Song and Mei Ning saw this, they showed no dissatisfaction. Given the immense danger, it was only expected for them to be more careful.

When Han Li finished speaking, Violet Spirit hesitated for a moment before nodding. "It is all as Brother Han says."

"Then I will see you again inside Devilfall Valley. Ah yes, Martial Niece Song, I've heard from the sect disciples that Senior Martial Brother Cheng has already arrived. Do you know where he is?"

Cultivator Song paused before hastily responding, "I do not know. Martial Senior Cheng had arrived here with a group of his close friends. I haven't seen him yet."

"So it was like that. It seems Senior Martial Brother Cheng wishes to enter the valley before he reaches the end of his lifespan." Han Li muttered as if speaking to himself.

After a moment of silence, Han Li frowned and asked, "I've also heard that the Moulan will be entering Devilfall Valley as well. Is this true? Do you have any information on this?"

As if feeling a slight headache over the matter, Cultivator Song could only helplessly respond, "We've also heard rumors of this, but the matter is unclear. We don't know if it is true."

Han Li stroked his chin and remained silent. A moment later, his expression faintly changed and he bid them farewell. As a result, the three women in the room looked at each other with dismay.

"What's going on? Why was Brother Han in such a hurry to leave?" Violet Spirit's eyes flickered with bewilderment.

Mei Ning frowned, appearing slightly disappointed. “I don’t know, but it seems Senior Han has other business to attend to.”

Cultivator Song glanced at the room’s door and muttered to herself for a moment.

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At that moment, Han Li was walking down a remote street in a calm and methodical manner. But in truth, he was harshly scolding someone in his mind, “Were you trying to scare me out of my mind!?”

An aged voice carelessly replied within Han Li’s mind, “Hehe! I was merely thinking that girl named Violet Spirit was deathly beautiful. Stirring a few of your thoughts is only natural.”

Han Li snorted and angrily continued, “Don’t tell me you forgot how you affected the emotions of my second Nascent Soul when you used the Seven Passions Art on it? You can feel whatever you wish, but don’t involve me. After all, my second Nascent Soul is linked with my consciousness. Besides, Violet Spirit’s current appearance isn’t anything special; you’ve yet to see her true appearance. And your concubine in the past, Ruyun, was said to be a beauty peerless in this world. How can a woman with an appearance like that drive you out of control? You aren’t trying to trick me, are you?”

“I originally thought to use the Seven Passions Art in order to deal with your primal soul, but who could’ve thought that a trifling early Nascent Soul cultivator possessed a second Nascent Soul and was able to resist calamity. How else would I have met my end here? Although the Seven Passions Art cannot control a cultivator’s consciousness, it can still control their emotions. Likewise, it can reduce one’s will to live in a fight and one’s resolution to kill. As for the girl, although she is using some sort of secret technique to hide her true face, I am able to see through it with my spiritual sense.” The old man’s voice slowed near the end

as if somewhat resentful.

“Even if your Seven Passions Art was more powerful, you will have little luck in leading me astray from my objectives. Although I do share some sensation with my second Nascent Soul, your Seven Passions Art won’t prove to be anything more than a minor hindrance. However, I completely didn’t expect that the Core Founder of the Thousand Bamboo School and the creator of the Great Development Technique, the Monarch of Soul Divergence, had survived until now by possessing a puppet. Were it not for your inconceivably powerful spiritual sense and your complete knowledge of the Great Development Technique, I wouldn’t have believed it. But regardless, if you casually stir my emotions over a female cultivator again don’t blame me for being impolite.” Han Li’s tone turned harsh at the end.

The old man snorted and disdainfully said, “Youngster Han, you should know that even with the assistance of the Soul Nurturing Wood my soul would last only several tens of years more before it disappears. Were if not for the fact that I had mostly finished my final puppet, I would’ve gladly passed on and reincarnated. After spending countless years inside a sensationless puppet, I’ve felt I’ve lived long enough. And if you hadn’t seen a woman for as long as I had, you’d be the same as well.”

When Han Li heard him, he rubbed his nose and felt his head deeply ache.

The true body of the old eccentric was actually hidden in the tube behind his back. Were it not for his agreement to teach Han Li the final three layers of the Great Development Technique and his willingness to impart several powerful puppet designs onto him that had never been published, Han Li would’ve dealt with him with several methods and exterminated him.

But most annoying of all was the old eccentric’s unfathomably powerful spiritual sense. Even as he was currently, his soul searching techniques still had no effect on the defenseless

eccentric. Rather, the old eccentric was nearly given the opportunity to control Han Li's soul, scaring Han Li away from using such a method again.

When faced against the Monarch of Soul Divergence, an eccentric that had lived over ten thousand years, Han Li found himself feeling completely powerless.

# Chapter 799: The Soul Attachment Technique

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Han Li paused for a moment and asked, “Old Eccentric, when you possessed the puppet body, you didn’t think about moving your primal soul out of it? It shouldn’t be difficult with your abilities.”

“You think the Soul Attachment technique is so simple to use? In the past, during my lifetime of great genius, I had divided my attention to too many things. Not only did I create the secret technique to strengthen one’s spiritual sense, but I also founded the Thousand Bamboo School and researched the long extinct puppet methods of the Heavenly South. These matters consumed a majority of my lifespan, not to mention that I had also cultivated during this time. Eventually, I reached late Nascent Soul stage and I ran amuck in the region without match.”

“You ran amuck in the region and were without match?” Han Li wore an odd expression on his face.

“What, you think I’m just running my mouth? When my cultivation reached great heights, I had challenged renowned cultivators, but I had always kept a low-profile about my successes. As a result, my name didn’t spread and only a few peak cultivators knew of my reputation. Not to mention other lands, the number one cultivators of the Heavenly South Righteous and Devil Dao at the time had both been beaten into submission by my hand. They were even willing to hand the Far West over to me and relinquish their forces over it. Do you truly believe that the Heavenly South cultivators would stay away otherwise? Even if the Far West was lacking even more resources than it was now and only had enough land for two countries, it is still enough to support many sects.” The Monarch of Soul Divergence spoke with a prideful tone.

“The Far West was something you fought for?” Han Li asked.

The old man continued with an even greater air of pride, “Not

only that, but I forced the two leading figures of the Righteous and Devil Dao to swear a venomous oath: within ten thousand years, their disciples and ancestors are not to tread into the Far West.”

“For someone of their stature to be driven as such.” The corner of Han Li’s mouth curled from disbelief.

“If they were unwilling, I would’ve clearly exterminated their disciples and descendants. Do you believe me to be the soft-hearted sort? If they wished to surround me with numbers, my thousand puppets would prove to be a fair fight. However, it is surprising that neither the Devil or the Righteous Dao haven’t invaded the Far West until now. Could it be that they are still obeying their ancestor’s orders until now?” The Monarch of Soul Divergence seemed somewhat baffled.

Han Li grew silent. The old eccentric wasn’t simply talking big. Even if he were exaggerating about the past, the thousand puppets that the Thousand Bamboo Sect possessed weren’t something to take lightly, even if they were only at Foundation Establishment stage. As for the Righteous and Devil Dao’s oaths to prevent them from conquering the Far West, there was also the matter that the distance to the Far West was too great, the resources too sparse, and the disinterest as well. Han Li didn’t bother to think too much about it as if it had little relation to him. As he thought about this, he heard the old man sigh.

“Just as I finished this and believed I stood at the peak of the cultivation world, I discovered I’d made a fatal error. My lifespan had fallen short and my cultivation had halted at late Nascent Soul stage. Although my aptitude and abilities were amazing, I only had a mere two hundred years of time left, not nearly enough for me to breakthrough to the Deity Transformation stage. If I hadn’t been distracted with puppet arts from the very start and created my own designs, I believe I would’ve had a very real chance of entering the Deity Transformation stage and ascended to the Spirit Realm. Instead, I was trapped inside of a puppet body for over ten

thousand years, leaving me terror-stricken the entire time.” The Monarch of Great Divergence spoke with a sullen voice as if he were dejected.

When Han Li heard that, he pursed his lips and rolled his eyes. He even felt a tinge of envy.

Ordinary cultivators would find it extremely difficult to form a Core or condense a Nascent Soul. As for this old man, he spoke of entering the Deity Transformation stage as if it weren’t a difficult matter in the least. If his words were true, then he was a heaven-defying existence, a cultivation genius that was seen only once in ten thousand years.

“After seeing that I no longer had any hope to enter Deity Transformation stage, I was unwilling to helplessly wait for my death to approach. It is said that the soul is immortal and that it reincarnates into another life. But is that still me if I don’t have any memories from that lifetime? I would be an entirely different person. In the next world, I may simply be an ordinary commoner lacking spirit roots. The chances of becoming a cultivator are extremely small. With this fear in my heart, I spent my remaining two hundred years of life toiling to create a way to extend my life or to retain my memories after reincarnation. As a result, I failed many times only to discover the Soul Attachment Technique by using the Great Development Technique as its base. It was a secret technique that hadn’t been discovered before.” With that said, the old man coldly laughed.

Han Li mysteriously smiled and said, “You abandoned a majority of your cultivation only to put your consciousness into a puppet. As a result, you became a living corpse for about ten thousand years.”

“Don’t you understand? I didn’t have any time and could only complete the Soul Attachment technique halfway through. Regardless, I used it due to a lack of a better choice and I ended up as I am today. After attaching myself to this puppet, I didn’t think

that my cultivation would disappear and I was only barely able to use my spiritual sense. Manifesting my Nascent Soul was out of the question. As for the secret room I was located in, it was guarded with fearsome spell formations and over a hundred puppet guards. Without a body or magic power, I wouldn't be able to control the puppets even if I managed to break the restrictions. Because I feared retaliation from my enemies, I hadn't told anyone about the secret room, and my disciples were only at Core Formation stage and were without the ability to find me, leaving me stuck there for ten thousand years. Were if not for my puppet body and the many spirit stones I stored in that secret room, I would've long since perished." Near the end, the old man's voice turned ice-cold.

Han Li frowned and became pensive. But soon, his expression grew lax and he asked, "Old Eccentric, why are you so talkative today? When I asked you about the past before, you were always indifferent and lazy, but now you are speaking in such great detail."

The old man snorted and angrily said, "Who said that I wasn't going to tell you? Since you've cultivated the Great Development Technique, you can be considered some kind of a disciple. Also, if you hadn't found the secret room at the Thousand Bamboo School so quickly, my soul would've soon scattered. After all, the Soul Attachment technique isn't a true method to extend one's life. Even if the puppet body managed to last ten thousand years, my soul would've burned out since it had lacked the nourishment from a true body for so long. I didn't expect that you would be so clever as to notice that my body was different from the other puppets and would rush to strike me first. You even nearly killed me."

"I was the one who rushed to strike? Were it not for you launching a sneak attack on me with your rubbish Seven Passions Art, I would've left you alone despite sensing there was something different about you. As a result, you formed a codependent bond

with my second Nascent Soul and couldn't further act out of fear of repercussion. It is true that you are able to drive my second Nascent Soul mad with the Seven Passions Art, but likewise, I can have my main Nascent Soul use the Assimilation Technique to remove your existence from the second Nascent Soul."

"How could I have known that a young eccentric such as yourself was able to condense a second Nascent Soul. You should know that I could only use my spiritual sense at the time as I wasn't able to use any magic power. Also, I only attacked you out of self-preservation." Feeling that he had done no wrong, the old man instead spoke with a righteous tone.

At that moment, Han Li grew silent and no longer wished to continue the conversation.

After a moment's pause, the old man said with a self-mocking tone, "Alright, let's drop the conversation for now. I didn't expect that you'd have a treasure made of Soul Nurturing Wood. Else, I would've perished after a year at most even if I had taken a hold of you. This is indeed a silver lining."

Han Li came to a sudden stop and calmly said, "I only allowed you to use the Soul Nurturing Wood because you agreed to teach me the last three layers of the Great Development Technique, not to mention my interest in your puppet designs. After all, you had spent the last ten thousand years sealed inside that secret room researching puppet designs. Since I've cultivated your Great Development Technique, I cannot allow those puppet designs to go to waste. This is simply a matter of business between us."

The old man roared with laughter from the back of Han Li's mind. "Youngster Han, you are becoming more pleasant to me by the moment. In the past, I also held deception in disdain. Were it not for the fact your aptitude is too poor and you are incapable of cultivating my art, I would've taken you in as a disciple and imparted my knowledge to you."

Han Li paused and blinked for a moment before wearing a slight smile. “I actually have many techniques right now, but while my spirit is willing, my talents are lacking. Even if you gave me a cultivation art that was a hundred times better than what I have now, I could not divert the attention to cultivate them. However, I am quite interested in your secret techniques.”

The old man carelessly said, “Secret techniques? You’re going to be disappointed. My secret techniques are all tied to my main cultivation art. If you do not cultivate it, you will be incapable of using any of my secret techniques.”

Han Li grew somewhat disappointed, but he changed the topic and said, “Then let’s leave the matter be. I am already very satisfied with being able to cultivate the Great Development Technique and acquire the puppet designs. My trip did not end up being a waste. However, I am confused about why you didn’t impart the true last three layers of the technique to your disciples, and instead gave them false but seemingly true incantations.”

The old man clicked his tongue and said, “My disciples? In the past hundreds of years, not a single one of them were able to cultivate to the Nascent Soul stage and take on my legacy. If I gave them the true final three layers of the Great Development Technique, it would only be inviting disaster upon them. As a matter of fact, while you aren’t a disciple of the Thousand Bamboo School, you were able to acquire the first layers of the Great Development Technique. It seems my reasoning actually held true.”

# Chapter 800: Elder Devil Realm

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Han Li's gaze flickered and he indifferently said, "The Great Development Technique wasn't something that I fought for over in the Far West. It was something that was delivered to me."

The Monarch of Soul Divergence casually replied, "Relax! The current Thousand Bamboo School is no longer being controlled by the lineage of my personal disciples. Even if you truly robbed it, I wouldn't mind."

"So long as it doesn't influence our agreement, you may think as you wish." Then with a hesitant expression, Han Li said, "However, I must ask you if you are truly incapable of dissolving the Soul Seal Curse."

"It's not impossible, but it isn't something that I can do given the limitations of my lifespan. Otherwise, no curse, no matter how wondrous it may be, cannot be seen through by me." The old man replied with a ton of disdain. Although Han Li had anticipated his answer, he still felt his heart weigh downed with immense disappointed.

With a neutral expression on his face, Han Li replied, "Alright, since you are unable to dissolve the curse, I can only make the journey to Devilfall Valley."

After an unexpected moment of silence, the old man said, "Youngster Han, entering Devilfall Valley is not a wise decision. I had once planned to enter there when my lifespan was nearing its end, but that changed once I discovered the Soul Attachment Technique. However, I had done my due research. Do you truly believe that you'll be able to safely leave the valley just because one or two fools manage to occasionally return alive? Not mentioning the ancient restrictions present, but the spatial tears are unimaginably fearsome. They would occasionally..." The old man's words trailed off and eventually came to a stop.

Han Li's heart stirred and he asked, "They would what?"

"The spatial tears would occasionally open pathways to other worlds and release demonic and devilish monsters. If you come across any of them, you had better hope for the best."

"Open the way to other worlds? What does that mean?" Han Li asked in alarm. "In addition to the Spirit Realm, the Immortal Realm and the Underworld, there are other worlds?"

The old man calmly explained, "In the past, I had acquired an ancient book. It happened to mention a few matters relating to other worlds. The Immortal Realm has no connection to our mortal world. The Spirit Realm and the Underworld are both worlds on a higher plane than ours but they aren't easily passed through. They are filled with vicious demons and ghosts but it is impossible for them to arrive in our world of their own volition.

"They are most similar to the elder devils of our world from the age of antiquity. If they have the opportunity to cross over into our world, they will take it with certainty. There are even a few elder devils that are named. If they send even a few doppelgangers into our realm, they will prove incredibly fearsome. As of current, you will not be able to handle them in the slightest."

"Elder devils? I've never heard of them before." Han Li spoke with an expression of astonishment.

"It's hard to say what they're like. They aren't like us humans or the demon beasts. They also take on a myriad of forms. During times of antiquity, it was said that there was once a path between the realm of elder devils and our world. As a result, these elder devils wreaked havoc in the human world. As a result, the ancient cultivators battled against them for countless years. Eventually, the cultivators were able to kill them one by one by using numbers to our advantage.

"However, the injuries and casualties in the war were said to be innumerable, leading to the extinction of many ancient techniques

and spirit beasts. It had much to do with the decline of ancient cultivators.” The Monarch of Soul Divergence spoke with a solemn tone.

“The ancient cultivators warred with these elder devils?” Han Li’s expression vastly changed. From the miraculous techniques and treasure they left behind, Han Li knew how formidable the ancient cultivators were. From the old eccentric’s tone, the ancient devils seemed to be an entire level above the ancient cultivators, much to Han Li’s shock.

“Not only that but a few Devil Dao cultivators who cultivated ancient devil arts later established themselves after discovering the existence of the Elder Devil Realm. They established techniques that were similar to the abilities of Elder Devils and even used secret techniques to part the boundaries of the world so that they could use the devilish Qi of the named Elder Devils, greatly increasing their abilities. While these devil techniques are admittedly powerful, when cultivated to their pinnacle, the user doesn’t ascend to the Spirit Realm. Instead, they are sent to the Elder Devil Realm and become one of their members. Of course, this is only something from legend and hasn’t been verified. However, there are many devil cultivators that covet this ferocious power and brave the dangers of cultivating these devil arts. After all, entering the Elder Devil Realm is something that can only occur when one reaches the Deity Transformation stage. There is no need for most cultivators to even consider it. Of course, the odds of Devilfall Valley’s spatial tears opening a path to another world is very small; it is possible you’ll make it through just fine and that this was only a groundless fear.”

Han Li suddenly recalled the several instances of demonic transformation arts he had seen in the past as well as a few odd silhouettes. He felt his blood run cold, feeling that the old man’s words held true.

After solemnly pondering for a long while, Han Li puzzlingly

asked, “If an Elder Devil could truly pass through a spatial tear in Devilfall Valley, why wasn’t the Heavenly South thrown into chaos in the past?”

The old man coldly laughed and said, “What do you mean? The spatial tears aren’t true pathways to another world. Only a few incarnations or lower grade devils are able to pass through. But because their cultivation isn’t great enough, they aren’t able to withstand the restrictions of our realm and stay here for too long. But before they return, they will have more than enough time to torture the cultivators entering Devilfall Valley.”

“So it was only restricted to lower grade devils and they are only able to stay for a short time.” Han Li’s stern expression relaxed and he sighed with relief. It appeared to be the same circumstances as when the Moulan used the ancient lantern to summon their Sacred Bird.

“Youngster Han, don’t be so happy so soon. Although it is only speculation, the Elder Devils that truly appear in the valley may be weaker for them to make it through the spatial tears, but their abilities and techniques are incredibly strange. Even if a human cultivator were to match them in cultivation, they would be certain to die.”

Han Li tensely frowned and let out a long sigh. He emotionlessly asked, “How does Senior know this without entering the valley? Could it be you’re just trying to scare me away?”

“While I haven’t entered the valley, several good friends of mine had entered. Their luck had failed them as soon as they entered the valley. They had encountered an Elder Devil, leaving only one of them alive to tell the tale. They were the same as me, vastly powerful cultivators who held little fame. As a result, few in the Heavenly South knew of them. That’s enough talk out of me today. If you still wish to enter Devilfall Valley, you had best be prepared to fend for yourself. Here is the fifth layer incantation for the Great Development Technique and two Core Formation puppet

designs, a portion of the reward that was previously agreed upon.”

As soon as that was said, a white jade slip flew out from the bamboo tube and it spun around his head once and then directly fell in Han Li’s grasp.

“I had believed that Senior had forgotten!” Although Han Li was still pondering about the Elder Devils, he revealed an expression of delight upon seeing this. He grabbed the jade slip and quickly sank his spiritual sense into it.

“I must now nurture my soul. It is fortunate that the Heavenfortune Cask still has my puppet designs. If you have no further business, don’t bother me.” After lazily speaking these words, the old man’s voice came to a sudden stop.

After Han Li finished looking through the jade slip, he turned around to look at the bamboo tube he carried on his back with a wavering expression. He knew the old man was still concealing something, but he couldn’t do anything about it. As for the Heavenfortune Cask, that was the name of the bamboo tube that Han Li carried on his back.

While the bamboo tube was completely unremarkable, it was a true spatial treasure and concealed the puppet body of the Monarch of Soul Divergence. Otherwise Han Li would’ve kept it in his storage pouch instead of carrying it on his back.

A long while later, Han Li put away the jade slip and glanced around before looking towards the sky. He then shot off the ground in an azure streak and directly flew out of the city.

By this time the sky was already dark, Han Li stopped above a forest near the city and descended near a huge tree. There seemed to be something vaguely close to it.

It was a giant head that had disheveled hair. If a mortal were to see it, they would immediately flee from fear. But if one were to closely look at it, they would discover that its entire body was

buried in the earth.

The head had long green-black hair with its face concealed behind the mass of hair. When Han Li approached it, the green giant sensed something and began to stir, opening its ghastly green eyes. When it clearly saw Han Li, the light from its eyes immediately disappeared and it wore an expression of obedience.

Han Li smiled and took several steps towards it before circling around it with interest.

“Not bad, it’s already begun to nurture a simple consciousness. It seems I’ll be able to put it to good use in Devilfall Valley.” Han Li muttered to himself with a happy tone.

Soon after, Han Li placed down several restrictions in the surrounding area before sitting down cross-legged. He didn’t immediately meditate, instead deciding to grab his storage pouch and fiddle with a yellow medallion, engraved with the words “Heavenpeak Sect”.

As Han Li squinted at it, his eyes glistened in the darkness.

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